

Awareness Through Puppetry:
Self-image in Feldenkrais Method and Material Performance

by

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Signed Declaration

I, Krystin Elinor Fredricksson, declare that this thesis is entirely my own work.

Where I have consulted the work of others, it is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates somatic movement and puppetry as tandem practices. It draws particularly on the somatic education approach of Moshe Feldenkrais, originator of the Feldenkrais Method (FM) and its two modalities; verbally guided Awareness Through Movement and hands-on Functional Integration lessons. I pinpoint self-image in FM, which relates to a person's kinaesthetic awareness of herself as she acts, as a key concept for theorizing puppetry, reframing it as person-image to avoid some of the theoretical pitfalls of 'self'. I re-examine the idea of body-image in Paul Schilder, Feldenkrais's source, and identify the importance of his work for critical thinking on person-image and performance. Relating person-image to the trainings and writings of Jacques Lecoq, Dennis Silk and Heinrich Von Kleist, I analyse the ways in which it can include objects, puppets and materials and propose a new practice, Awareness Through Puppetry, which goes beyond an application of FM in puppetry training. I apply the fresh understanding of person-image I have developed to specific performances by Pierre Tual, Ilka Schönbein and Xavier Le Roy. Throughout the thesis I refer to Tim Ingold's concept of the 'meshwork', weaving lines in, out and around my practice and thinking, connecting them to critical thinking more broadly in performance studies and beyond.

My contributions to knowledge in this thesis are an assessment of Schilder and Feldenkrais's work applied to somatic performance practice in puppetry, which I understand as an approach as much as an outcome, leading to the practice of Awareness Through Puppetry, and a fresh approach to performance analysis through the lens of person-image. I situate the thesis in a

broad ecological context where puppetry has a new subversive role as a somatic technology through which it is possible to discover something about what it is to be human and nonhuman, and how these interact.

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Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	5
Contents	7
Chapter 1 Introduction	9
1.1 A chorus of voices	10
1.2 Critical tools: Meshworks	17
1.2.1 Critical tools: 'Umwelt', 'Lebenswelt', 'Innenwelt'	21
1.2.2 Critical tools: 'actants' and agency	23
1.3 First approximation: Feldenkrais Method	26
1.4 First approximation: 'self-image'	30
1.5 First approximation: 'puppetry' and 'material performance'	38
1.6 Methodology, structure and case studies	45
Chapter 2 Personal grounding	49
2.1 Why connect Feldenkrais Method and puppetry? An anecdote	49
2.2 Second approximation: Feldenkrais Method	52
2.3 Second approximation: self-image	57
'Thing interlude #1: Teddy'	60
2.4 Second approximation: puppetry and material performance	62
Chapter 3 Schilder's mercurial body-image	71
3.1 Introduction	71
3.2 Movement, action, function: the enmeshed body-image	74
3.3 Schilder and the community of body-images	81
3.4 Schilder on 'outside space'	85
3.4.1 Objects and touch	89
3.4.2 Agency	95
3.4.3 Structure	97
3.4.4 Focus	101
3.4.5 Gravity	103
3.4.6 Expanding body-image	106
3.5.1 Body image since Schilder	109
3.5.2 Towards somatic ethics	117
3.5.3 Towards somatic ecology	120

Chapter 4 Feldenkrais's self-image: 'something invisible, visible'	123
4.1 Introduction	123
4.2 Feldenkrais and self-image	128
4.2.1 'Improvement'	133
4.2.2 Awareness (through movement)	135
4.3 Why change? Is FM a normative practice?	141
4.4 Self-image in ATM	151
4.5 Self-image in FI	158
4.6 Feldenkrais, Nora and puppetry	161
4.7 Playing with self-image: beginnings but no endings	167
Chapter 5 Towards training: Awareness Through Puppetry	171
5.1 Transition from FM to puppetry	171
5.2 Towards 'Awareness Through Puppetry'	175
5.3 Things as guides / miming the world (Jacques Lecoq)	183
5.3.1 Things as guides / monomotivation and intention (Dennis Silk)	187
5.3.2 Things as guides / perfection, awareness, readiness (Kleist)	198
5.4 Skeletons as guides	207
5.5 Meshworks and skill	211
5.5.1 The puppeteer-puppet relationship	215
5.6 Imagining things	217
Provocations for a puppeteer (Awareness Through Puppetry)	222
Chapter 6 Case Studies: Protean person-images in performance	225
6.1 Preamble	225
6.1.1 Theoretical groundwork: a critique of 'manipulacting'	225
6.1.2 From Self-Other to dynamic person-image	228
6.2 Pierre Tual and company / <i>Fastoche</i>	231
6.3 Ilka Schönbein / <i>Chair de ma chair</i>	248
6.4 Xavier Le Roy / <i>Self Unfinished</i>	268
Chapter 7 Conclusion	288
'Thing interlude #2: Noodling'	294
Bibliography	298
Workshops and trainings	324

Chapter 1

Introduction

When I was fifteen, the stillness of my mother in her coffin was shocking. The coldness of her brow that I kissed, like stone. The fixity of death. No longer in time. No future, except that of decay. No self, no person present. Movement is life indeed. The warmth of my soft-breathing child asleep. The delicate movement of her breath that I sense, even in the dark, as I check on her, accompanied by its gentle, intermittent sound.

The puppet has multiple possible futures and only a very slow process of decay ahead, generally speaking. It is brought to life, and in a sense it really has a life of its own; it is an extension of the person who gives it movement and breath. It is a way of extending and exploring her self-image. In this thesis I use examples from puppetry and material performance to explore the notion of person-image, a development from Schilder's 'body-image' and Feldenkrais's 'self-image', and its place in a radical performance ecology.

*

Feldenkrais Method (FM) is a somatic education process that uses the development of situated movement awareness and environmentally anchored movement for neuromuscular retraining. In the method, which is named after its founder, Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), self-image broadly refers to kinaesthetic awareness of oneself in action.

The terms 'puppetry' and 'material performance' refer to processes of creation and presentation in which responding to nonhuman materialities is key and which use the dance between human and nonhuman as a creative source.

I qualified as a FM practitioner in 2007 and have been a theatre-maker since 1994.

*

1.1 A chorus of voices

The concrete! What one holds in one's hand, what one can touch, sniff, eat, grip, salivate, sweat. It already smells of the stage, it seems to me.

Jean-Louis Barrault (14)

Tout bouge. Tout évolue, progresse.

Jacques Lecoq (1997:173)

Movement is life. Life is a process. Improve the quality of the process and you improve the quality of life itself.

Moshe Feldenkrais (Beringer 2001:xi)

I seem to be a verb.

Buckminster Fuller (Wheeler 135)

Movement is Consciousness./ That's what puppetry is, right?

Kate Brehm (Posner 84)

I heard the words 'fixed and cannot move' in a song; that's how puppets are – and are *not*.

Christopher Leith (Masoliver)

The opposite of embodied is dead, not omniscient.

Bruno Latour (2004b:209)

I cite these fragments by way of a micro-introduction to this thesis and my influences. Barrault speaks of materiality as the essence of theatre and I agree. Materiality is also the essence of how human beings construct themselves as embodied beings, moving in and as part of a material environment. For Lecoq, everything moves, and the recognition of the dynamics of different materials as people move with and through them will play an important role in my argument. Equating movement with life and seeing life as process, Feldenkrais offers a scientist's tilt on Lecoq's artistic vision, as well as the notion of improvement which will be explored later. Fuller connects the 'I' very clearly with the process: 'I seem to be a verb'. For Brehm movement is consciousness and it is not only for the human that there is no 'consciousness' without movement, but for the puppet too. I will look at playing with behaving 'as if' something existed or were possible, in relation to performance, movement and self-image, and investigate the role of the imagination in creating and limiting movement. Leith identifies the dual nature of the puppet as both unmoving and not, leading us back to Lecoq's 'tout bouge'; he hints at the special nature of the puppet and what it allows the puppeteer to sense. Latour is the only thinker (as opposed to practitioner) in this crowd, and his phrase warns against the metaphysical trap waiting to snap when writing about puppets; puppets are not degenerate gods (Craig) and their powers stem from their materiality, not from another realm (Buschmeyer in Jurkowski 1988), in spite of their status between being, appearing and apparition (Jusselle 2008:9). Which is not to deny the potency of animist thought and play experiments; more on that later.

This is not a thesis only about puppetry, but one aim is to debunk the idea that puppetry is 'all in the hands', as I have heard one puppeteer describe

her practice¹. I link puppetry practice with somatic education and consider the implications for political ecology and how people live in the world. I ask how Feldenkrais's concept and use of self-image in his method can be a generative dramaturgical and critical tool for material performance. Within this are the more straightforward, practical questions, What does Feldenkrais Method (FM) offer the puppeteer? and, What does puppetry offer the FM practitioner? I do not aim to prescribe modes of training or performance preparation (although this is a by-product), but rather reflect on how putting puppetry and FM into conversation increases the reach of both. I do not address the role of the audience or spectator; my focus is on the experiences of making and doing. The project is ambitious and idealistic in the sense of aspiring to oil processes of change rather than aspiring to an ideal. It is about how living in the world creates (and destroys) humans and creates (and destroys) the world. I consider moments in training, performance and life. In this introduction, I map out my terms and set up a critical framework for the work.

There is an interest in FM in the puppetry world: it is taught in puppetry schools in France and Germany², there are other puppeteer/FM practitioners besides myself (Nicolas Gousseff and Claire Vialon in France, for example), Basil Jones of Handspring, perhaps the most famous puppet company in the world, is aware of it and links the use of breath in puppetry to that in FM (Sichel 166³). Although different, Alexander Technique (AT) is a somatic

1 Rachel Warr at *Pulling the Strings in Surgery: Roger Kneebone & Rachel Warr*, a public event (part of Clod Ensemble's 'Performing Medicine' series) exploring parallels between puppetry and the operating theatre, 9 Nov. 2015.

2 Claire Heggen's pedagogy at France's national puppetry school, École Nationale Supérieure des Arts de la Marionnette (ESNAM), is heavily influenced by her encounter with Feldenkrais at Peter Brook's theatre in the 1970s (Fredricksson). Nicolas Gousseff, FM practitioner, also teaches periodically at ESNAM. FM practitioner, Hermann Klein, teaches puppetry students at the State University of Music and the Performing Arts Stuttgart (HMDK).

education method related to FM from which Feldenkrais drew inspiration; AT has been practised and advocated by puppeteers Stephen Mottram and the now deceased Christopher Leith⁴. The particular relationship of the body to objects in puppetry relates to the importance of skeletal and environmental awareness in FM. This connection between the somatic and the puppetic⁵ exists in practice but has not been theorized.

In the performing arts generally, interest in FM is growing. The last two years alone has produced, for example, Worsley's book, *Feldenkrais for Actors* (2016), a special issue on Moshe Feldenkrais of *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* (2015) and conferences at the Universities of Bath and West London (2015, 2016)⁶. In the last decade there have been PhD theses where FM is a central focus in relation to dance (Garner 2008, Kampe 2013) and acting (Edinburgh 2009⁷). Two volumes of *The Feldenkrais Journal* have been devoted to the performing arts (2002, 2003) and one to improvisation (2014). Many of the practices treated pertain to puppetry, but no one specifically addresses the conversation between puppetry and FM (apart from myself in the above-mentioned journal). This thesis therefore charts new territory.

3 Jones is quoted saying, 'The lead puppeteer will give an in-breath: we are about to go. It is a kind of signalling, a semiotic of movement. Of course it links to Tai Chi, Hindu movement forms, Feldenkreis (sic); it has many links. We understand those links so well'.

4 Both have referenced AT in workshops in my presence.

5 Coined from the French 'marionnettique'.

6 *(re)storing performance: The Feldenkrais Method and Creative Practice*, 27 June 2015, University of Bath; *Making the Impossible Possible': The Feldenkrais Method in Music, Dance and Creative Practice*, 30 Apr. 2016, University of West London.

7 Edinburgh refers to the practices of object manipulation and aikido; his work is the nearest of those referenced to my own research.

My argument hinges on an understanding of materialities (including puppets and bodies) where these are not environments through which people move or in which they live, or things they use, or, in the case of puppets, objects through which a performer can project, but lines along which human beings sense⁸. My use of lines and 'along' is influenced by Tim Ingold's thinking on meshworks, which I expand on below, as well as his terms 'enworlding' and 'lifeworld', and ideas around skilled practice and developmentally embodied responsiveness. For now, I ask my reader to imagine the trembling of a spider's web; both spider and fly feel the vibrations *along* the threads. My concern is with diffused, multi-directional sensitivity and awareness. In relation to the meshwork, I also consider Jane Bennett and Bruno Latour's ideas on 'actants'. I argue that self-image, as lived, is a key nexus or knot in the tangle of materialities, and a conceptual tool which helps unpick what happens in performance where mingling people and things is the point. I contend that this collaboration must be a central focus in thinking about performance generally and that all performance is material.

'Self-image' refers to how much of a person is included in her image of herself as she acts. I stake out the territory of 'person-image' which I believe avoids the problematics of 'self' and offers a subtly different concept. I look to Feldenkrais's source for the concept of self-image, Paul Schilder (1886-1940), whose research on 'body-image' (his term) in the field of psychiatry and psychoanalysis emerges as a rich and largely untapped source for critical

8 In this thesis, I expressly do not enter into any debate about 'things' and 'objects' and use these terms freely and almost interchangeably. If I align my thinking with any notion, it is Ingold's 'thing' as a gathering of lines, within his concept of the meshwork. I set to one side object-oriented ontology (Harman) and thing theory (Brown), which might have been candidates for consideration here, in order to focus on elaborating my own argument in terms of the meshwork. These other avenues might be fruitfully pursued in the future in relation to what I weave here however; Bennett's analysis might provide a good starting point (2015).

thinking about material performance. Closely related to self-image is the use of imagination in FM; the kinaesthetic visualization of oneself in movement. I look at the difficulties of imagining movement and how these can be harnessed creatively in a puppetry approach.

I am not alone in seeing puppets as a special, particularly sensitive, form of materiality, and as tools through which it is possible to discover something about what it is to be human (Bell, Cohen, Francis, Gross, Jurkowski), but theorizing a connection between somatic education and puppetry is, I believe, novel. In Chapter 5, I propose the beginnings of a new practice I call Awareness Through Puppetry. While object-theatre makers such as Molnar, Limbos and Carrignon rely less on the sensitive corporeal connection I address, and don't necessarily see their work as puppetry (Jmil), I contend that my observations about meshworks also apply to their work and to other performance genres. I propose that puppetry be seen more as an approach than an outcome, and that some performance that does not consider itself to be puppetry can be fruitfully viewed from a puppetic point of view. The case studies in Chapter 6 refer to artists exploring person-image through (sometimes loosely) figurative forms.

Puppetry might be seen as an art-form which explores and exploits the 'other' rather than the self (Gross, Kohler, Piris). In FM, self-image *is* the other in a way; it is the schism in the human between what she is and her self-image that gives a person her richness and her problems. I see puppetry as a kind of living proof that self is in other and other is in self. Bringing somatic practice into conversation with material performance provokes questions regarding agency and ethics. I aim to offer another perspective on Matthew Isaac Cohen's remark that, 'Puppets in performance can provide powerful lessons in

how to deal humanely with other people' (130)⁹. How do they provide these lessons and what is it to 'deal humanely with other people'? Can a coupling of the arts of puppetry and somatic awareness offer a foil to neoliberalism, or at least a novel critical apparatus and awareness practice? I contend that FM and material theatre have much to offer together as restorative human and ecological practices.

Throughout the thesis I draw examples from my own performance work and its creation, my teaching and learning experiences, and from performances I have seen, both of puppetry and work which does not frame itself as puppetry where appropriate. My methodology relates the parallel development of my own experience in puppetry and FM training and exploration situations, as both receiver and leader, to my readings and theoretical understandings of somatic education and puppetry practice, technique, training and spectating. My research draws on my training and expertise as a Lecoq-trained performer and theatre-maker (Ecole Jacques Lecoq), and as a puppeteer and FM practitioner. My practice precedes and has continued throughout the research for this thesis and there is a constant dialogue between my doing and thinking. My theatre teachers and mentors over the years who have influenced this work are Philippe Gaulier (ex-Lecoq teacher), Krikor Belekian (architect and director of Lecoq's L.E.M. - Laboratoire d'Etude du Mouvement), Jean-Louis Heckel (co-founder of French company Nada Théâtre), Shiro Daimon (ex-Noh actor turned contemporary performer), Yves Marc (Decroux-trained co-founder of Théâtre de Mouvement), Alain Recoing (French puppet master), Christopher Leith, Rene Baker, Sue Buckmaster and Stephen Mottram (British puppet masters), plus all the other theatre, aikido and FM practitioners with whom I have played.

⁹ Taylor, in her introduction to Handspring, also asks what puppets teach us about ourselves (12).

There is not the space here to summarize the practices of these various practitioners; their presence will be elucidated as relevant in the discussion.

I have packed a lot into my title, so, after some critical framing, let me unpack a little. The following sections are first approximations of my terms enabling an overview of my terrain. My methodology of accumulated 'approximations' is drawn from FM where the term is used to refer to a layered approach to exploration and learning. The term 'approximation' is used by FM practitioners to refer to an exploratory step in a learning process. However the more usual meanings of approaching, being near in space or time, or a value that is nearly but not correct, do hint at the sense that approximations are always near to a point, an ideal or an idea; an approximation relates to something, not nothing. A first approximation is an initial exploration of a specific movement and how much awareness of it is present. Subsequent approximations refine or shift what was learnt or discovered at the start. I expand on this methodology at the end of this chapter. In the thesis, each successive section and chapter brings new approximations, fresh attempts to come at the subject from alternative angles, with different strategies.

1.2 Critical tools: Meshworks

... the *meshwork* of entangled lines of life, growth and movement. This is the world we inhabit ... what is commonly known as the 'web of life' is precisely that: not a network of connected points, but a meshwork of interwoven lines. (Ingold, 2011:63)

Ingold, takes the term 'meshwork' from Henri Lefebvre (Ingold 2007:80), who writes:

... mental and social activity impose their own meshwork upon nature's space, upon the Heraclitean flux of spontaneous phenomena, upon that chaos which precedes the advent of the body; they set up an order which, as we shall see, coincides, but *only up to a point*, with the order of words. Traversed now by pathways and patterned by networks, natural space changes: one might say that practical activity writes upon nature, albeit in a scrawling hand, and that this writing implies a particular representation of space. (117) (His italics.)

This 'practical activity written upon nature' is akin to Feldenkrais's 'self-image' which 'implies a particular representation of space' and which might be seen as a constraint if a person didn't have sensitivity to feedback. This sensitivity is what FM and puppetry develop. Ingold goes beyond Lefebvre in making the meshworks of people, environment and things intertwine in an inseparable and non-hierarchical way, simply because any element is impossible without the others: I do not just require ground to walk on but air, water, things, a place to live in, night and day, and so on. This is Ingold's so-called 'lifeworld'. He considers and rejects Latour's actor-network theory (ANT), which is a model for understanding modern societies as networks with 'fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary character that is never captured by the notions of levels, layers, territories, spheres, categories, structure, systems' (1990:3). Ingold proposes instead 'SPIDER' - 'skilled practice involves developmentally embodied responsiveness' (2011:65). This idea assumes the primacy of *movement* while Latour's network is still a structure, albeit an organic one. Feldenkrais also chooses movement as a route to awareness (his 1972 book is called *Awareness Through Movement*, the name also given to his verbal lessons). Movement can occur along lines whereas connected points suggest a

conceptual framework where information exchange is possible, but not subtle, close or loose-woven textures, which is to say, not variation or different qualities of exchange. Ingold therefore rejects Latour's attribution of agency to all elements in the network since it cannot be said that a pebble and a person have comparable agency. Rather agency comes about thanks to the meshwork; 'The web, in short, is the very condition of my agency. But it is not, in itself, an agent' (2011:93). Thinking in terms of the meshwork avoids ontological problems by focusing on living rather than being; it rejoins Feldenkrais's 'life is a process' and Lecoq's 'tout bouge'. Importantly, Ingold's thinking, influenced by Ortega y Gasset and Karl Marx, acknowledges the process of living which, for humans, can be charted by shifting self-image; 'what we are, or what we can be, does not come ready made. We have, perpetually and never-endingly, to be making ourselves' (7). This is Ingold, but could be Feldenkrais. The selves that we are making are our self-images. I might be able to lose or gain a bit of weight, strengthen my core or become more supple, but in order to change how I act in the world on a more fundamental and global level, I need to change my self-image. The self-image is the mutable part, it is what my intention and attention does with matter. FM practitioner trainer, Jeff Haller, claims, 'we have the biological capacity to observe what we are doing and refine our activities. This does not mean we can change ourselves, only our self-image, that is, our thinking, sensing, feeling and acting' (2006).

FM deals in environmentally grounded, or situated, movement. Ingold wants to reframe the environment, 'as a domain of entanglement'; 'It is within such a tangle of interlaced trails, continually ravelling here and unravelling there, that beings grow or 'issue forth' along the lines of their relationships' (2011:70). My research looks at the specific tangles produced when humans

make performance purposely with and through nonhuman materials, as the driving force.

According to Feldenkrais, 'we act in accordance with our self-image' (1972:3). The meshwork is the condition of agency, according to Ingold. Below I expand on why I choose to reject the 'self' of self-image and replace it with person. My notion of a person reaches far beyond the confines of any body and any mind but does include one specific and inseparable body and mind in each case. There is a lack of hierarchy anywhere in the idea of person-image as a knot in the meshwork; a coming together of person, environment, weather, things... an entanglement of person and lifeworld which influences the lines along which a person travels through life. Body is an aspect of mind, mind an aspect of body, both aspects of society and nature, and nature and society aspects of body and mind. 'Person-image' involves a collaboration with the material flow of the world. I consider how the puppet influences the puppeteer's self-use in this meshwork, how and when person-image includes objects or puppets and what scope there is for playing with this.

Although Feldenkrais never speaks in terms of a meshwork, he emphasizes global, situated, function in relation to context and environment. He was interested in Wiener's 'cybernetics', which referred to the feedback mechanisms in 'the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal' (19) and might be considered a conceptual precursor to the meshwork¹⁰.

¹⁰ Cybernetics is however criticized by Berthoz as not offering an active theory of perception (151). Feldenkrais makes passing reference to it in *The Elusive Obvious* in relation to the feedback loop of skeleton-muscles-CNS-environment (1981:22).

Near the beginning of the Amherst FM practitioner training in 1980¹¹, Feldenkrais demonstrates his vision of a person which might be seen as an intermingling of lines:

... (for) important things in your life, the change must be of the entire person, not of the body, not of the little place in the back ... If you have a bad back ... it is medical practice to heal the back. My practice is to heal the feet and the neck and the shoulders until I go to the point where the trouble is where it disappears by itself ... If you make one detail work properly, it's nothing. (*Amherst 1980, 10*)

It is easy to extrapolate to the meshwork of society, and Feldenkrais saw his method as reaching far beyond 'bodywork'.

1.2.1 Critical tools: 'Umwelt', 'Lebenswelt', 'Innenwelt'

Ingold uses Uexküll's theory of the Umwelt, in which the outer world is particular to, and endowed with meaning by the creature experiencing it. If the Umwelt is the lines of the outer world as experienced, then the Lebenswelt, or lifeworld, is all the experiences; the Innenwelt, used by Lacan in contrast to the Umwelt, might describe self-image or what the person makes of these experiences. Ingold concludes that 'the organism (animal or human) should be understood not as a bounded entity surrounded by an environment but as an unbounded entanglement of lines in fluid space' (2011:64). Um-, Leben- and Innen-welt are not separate entities, but intertwined in a biosemiotic whole. Conceptually, the Umwelt closes creatures in their worlds. A person's Innenwelt

11 During his lifetime, Feldenkrais trained 13 people to practice his method in Tel Aviv (Israel), 1969-71. In San Francisco (U.S.), 1975-78, he trained another 65 students. 235 students attended the Amherst (U.S.) training starting in 1980, of which Feldenkrais taught the first two summers; his assistants, drawn from the original 13, taught the rest (Reese 2012). Recordings of the Amherst training are available on loan to FM practitioners from The Feldenkrais Guild UK.

seen as self-image offers the potential to shift her Umwelt, or how she is in the world. Ingold writes:

In that very act of standing back and reflecting on the conditions of existence, the human Umwelt becomes an Innenwelt – literally a ‘subjective universe’ – an organization of representations, internal to the mind, which lend meaning to the raw material of experience. (80)

But it is always ‘the whole creature’ as Wendy Wheeler puts it, involving ‘mind-body-environment’ as well as ‘the whole system (minds-bodies-cultural-social-and-natural-environments)’ which needs to be acknowledged for ‘human flourishing and creative living’ (33). Looking at self-image and puppetry together helps to understand how I extend beyond me, and how environment extends into me; our entanglement and my enworlding.

During Feldenkrais’s early formative years, ideas around complexity were bubbling up in diverse areas. Feldenkrais read widely and conversed ardently; some of these ideas undoubtedly reached him, as well as what might be called ‘the complexity turn’ seen as a more general conceptual shift. Wheeler identifies some of the key ideas in the first half of the twentieth century coming from Bertalanffy in biology, Prigogine in flow dynamics (along with Feldenkrais’s friend Aaron Katzir (Reese 2015)), Wiener in cybernetics, Cannon on homeostasis and Whitehead on organic mechanisms (Wheeler 52). In relation to complex systems, the meshwork image might appear too simple, unless perhaps one sees each line as itself composed of a meshwork. What is important for my argument is that the self-image is a hub where observation, choice and action happen.

1.2.2 Critical tools: 'actants' and agency

Bennett's use of Latour's term 'actants' in *Vibrant Matter* (2010) has been appropriated in the field of material performance. Posner finds Bennett's description of the agency of the inanimate material world 'similar to how puppeteers have long articulated their interplay with puppets' (6). 'Actants' dissolves the hierarchy putting people above objects. Bennett summarizes Latour's concept thus: 'an actant is a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events' (viii). In Latour's essay, "How to Talk About the Body?", he argues that 'the more you learn, the more differences exist' (2004b:213), and, in *Politics of Nature*, that 'reality grows to precisely the same extent as the work done to become sensitive to differences' (2004a:85). The making a difference of actants and differentiating of humans covers the nonhuman-human meshwork of interactions. I am interested in Bennett's aim to inspire 'more attentive encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities' (x), which could be a description of good puppetry, but frustrated by her lack of practical suggestions as to how to facilitate these. These encounters involve tuning human ability to differentiate and are facilitated when there are also more attentive encounters between people-materialities and other people-materialities, such as in FM.

However, while I might work with the materiality of a puppet and it can have a very strong, almost magical power over me as a puppeteer, leading to a kind of possession (Jurkowski, Schönbein, Taylor), or over the audience for

whom it comes alive, it will not exhibit agency without my skilful puppeteering¹². It might induce a sense of the uncanny by its still presence, but even this is partly the result of the skill of the puppet-maker (plus the eyes and brain of the viewer). The distinction between appearing to have agency and having it is important for thinking about puppetry. Ingold elaborates:

Since agency calls for skill, and since skill arises through development, it follows that the process of development is a *sine qua non* for the exercise of agency. To attribute agency to objects that do not grow or develop, that consequently embody no skill, and whose movement is not therefore coupled to their perception, is ludicrous. (2011:94)

Ingold dismisses the idea of fixed objects, claiming that live beings could not interact with them; every thing and being is a line and in life, but there is a distinction between things that are alive and moving (from their own propulsion) and things that aren't. Along the lifeline of a pebble, the pebble is changing very slowly. He suggests that 'to render the life of things as the agency of objects is to effect a double reduction, of things to objects and of life to agency' (2010:7). With regard to puppets, Ingold's thinking helps to shift the dialogue away from treating objects as though they had agency, or lending them agency by calling them 'actants', towards something more complex. Rather than separate entities acting as agents, or actants as points in a network, Ingold proposes an entangled meshwork of lines of life where everything is connected through its intertwining, but the power of action is not

¹² Skill in puppetry depends on the tradition a particular puppeteer is in, going from the highly codified such as Japanese Bunraku or Chinese hand puppetry, to the eclecticism of contemporary European puppetry with its many jostling techniques and styles. Jurkowski points out that the skill of the European puppeteer is located in her negotiation of 'what is happening 'in-between'' (2012:131). Astles also picks up on this, from a slightly different angle, recognizing a shift in puppetry practice from a focus on the animation of material to an interest in how the puppeteer treats her material (*Tables Rondes*, from 01:30:00).

equally distributed. This helps towards a sense of ethical responsibility for one's actions which it is possible to argue evaporates in a network of actants; if stuff acts, then I can't help that happening. The puppetry historian's perspective that 'the distinction between living and inert matter is basic to how humans sort out the world' (Blumenthal 65) may be true, but I am entangled in a meshwork with other humans and nonhumans and need to respect the vibrations through the meshwork. Puppets are a type of thing made to be played by humans, in a meshwork, or entanglement, of lines including the person, her self-image, the thing or things and the material life from which they come – wood, resin, cloth or whatever. The things give to me, the puppeteer, but I take responsibility for what I do with them.

While Latour's network and points leads to distinct entities, nonhuman and human, where agency suggests acting *on* something, the meshwork implies acting *with*; not directions of action to and fro, but emergent actions. Ingold draws a parallel with the 'haecceities', or sets of relations, of Deleuze:

These haecceities are not *what* we perceive, since in the world of fluid space there are no objects of perception. They are rather what we perceive *with*. In short, to perceive the environment is not to look back on the things to be found in it, or to discern their congealed shapes and layouts, but to join with them in the material flows and movements contributing to their – and our – ongoing formation. (2011:88) (His italics.)

According to Ingold, there is no 'ready-made world' but rather 'a world-in-formation'; the organism is seen as a knotting of lines in shifting space. This aligns with Feldenkrais's notion that people should not adapt to the world around them, but progress into it, along it, with it; this is a sign of health (Amherst 1980, 1 00:20:24). There is no linearity but a constantly growing,

criss-crossing meshwork. In *The Nonhuman Turn* (Grusin 2015), Sheldon identifies a tendency in critical thinking which allows things a stronger existence than Ingold's meshwork without making them unreachable entities, or strong 'actants' as in Latour:

From Luciana Parisi's abstract matter to Jane Bennett's vibrant matter, feminist new materialism sees objects as a concrescence or intensive infolding of an extensive continuum. Matter draws together what appears separate and makes the totality subject to mutation and emergence. (196)

This sounds like a complexity view of 'meshwork' to me, where things and people are, to different degrees, particular tangles and open to further entanglement. It is within this vision of an emergent meshwork that I wish to place my argument.

1.3 First approximation: Feldenkrais Method

Feldenkrais developed his method of somatic education throughout his life, drawing on his background as an engineer and physicist, self-directed research into anatomy and early neuroscience, exhaustive personal experimentation after a knee injury, the practice and teaching of judo in which he became a black belt, early tutoring jobs and his Hasidic roots¹³. FM is a learning modality which uses movement to address habit and faulty self-use and activate neuromuscular reprogramming. All you can do with a puppet is move it, or not move it. Even speaking through it involves moving it, or not

¹³ Mark Reese's detailed biography fleshes out our understanding Feldenkrais's life and how he developed his method (2015).

moving it. It has no psychology, no thoughts, no feelings. It exists as something more than an object mainly through movement. Perhaps this helps understand Feldenkrais's choice of movement as a means to access the person; a person moves, or does not, relating parts of herself to each other, or not. Movement is an observable quantity in the world in the way thought, emotion and feeling are not.

Feldenkrais states that, 'The results of faulty habits are what are called character or chronic diseases' (2005:11). In his book, *Body and Mature Behaviour* (1949), he sets out physiological and behavioural bases and arguments to the effect that the degeneration of the human is not inevitable and the endeavour to change is both laudable and necessary. He postulates that human consciousness will remain stunted so long as people do not collectively address the need to function optimally within our physical, gravity-bound environment; this is the next transition to be made in global human development. He analyses what distinguishes erect human posture from that of other animals, noting the importance of the tiny amount of energy required to initiate movement from standing, and the capacity, in fully realized, erect posture (with minimum muscular tonus) to move in any direction easily and without prior reorganization. Immobility is less easy than movement, but fully realized erect posture is the point of greatest potential energy and therefore potency (2005:92, 94). This is when the centre of gravity is at its highest. He recognizes an understanding of this in Eastern practices, such as yoga and judo (2005:105, 1958, 2010b). The state of potency can be strong or delicate; it is not about maximum but situation-appropriate power.

If I learnt basic Mandarin, that might be enough to see me through a holiday, but if I was going to live in China it would be in my interest to learn the local language properly. All humans live in gravity, yet few of us learn to

function optimally in it. Feldenkrais writes, 'There being no instinctive mode of doing in most acts, we can learn any performance' (2005:131); why just get by in gravity when we can become refined and fluent in our self-use, particularly if we are going to perform?

FM is practised via one-on-one 'Functional Integration' (FI) lessons¹⁴, which are hands-on and mainly non-verbal; movements are gently explored with guidance from the practitioner, and 'Awareness Through Movement' (ATM) lessons where verbal invitations to explore and bring awareness to different movements are given by the practitioner to a group. Feldenkrais claimed his method was concerned with learning to learn; it is not about learning to do anything in particular but with how to do any activity better, which is to say congruently with human anatomy and gravity. Given that it is concerned with learning, it has no end goal except the autonomy of the student from the teacher when she reaches a point of being able to apply the principles of the method herself. The learning is without limits. Serious studies are slowly accruing which analyse FM's degree of efficacy in many areas; a broad summary drawing on diverse databases and publications in different languages was collated in 2015 (Hillier and Worley). While there are problems of bias and poor reporting methods for many of the studies, the authors claim, 'The majority of the 20 included studies reported significant positive effects of FM in a variety of populations and outcomes of interest' (10). They include tests with healthy people as well as those with specific conditions, but no arts-related studies, in which it might be even harder to produce 'objective' results without bias. In my experience of teaching FM to a broad range of people I find it does

¹⁴ By 1980, Feldenkrais regretted this name because of the mathematical connotation of 'integration' and the fact that 'no one knows what is integration' (sic). He would have preferred 'Functional Synthesis' because 'we try to build up a new function out of the old elements ... that functions better than before' (*Amherst 1980*, 1 00:12:00).

not work for everyone at all times. It is demanding, like learning a musical instrument, and requires an ability to pay close attention to oneself. This can be developed, to a degree, but it is impossible to force a reluctant student to learn or notice change.

Of particular relevance for the discussion in this thesis is the manner in which, in FI, the practitioner moves the student, or connects her own skeleton to the student's skeleton, as a means to connect to or communicate with her central nervous system (CNS). There is a clear link between hands-on practice and puppeteering, both including the practitioner and a partner in a feedback relationship. The skeleton might be seen as the material core of the person, or inner puppet. I return to this idea and its problems in Chapter 5.

Feldenkrais developed over a thousand ATMs, some exploring functional movement riddles in great detail, others focused more on self-image and some concerned additionally with social interaction, such as the many rolling lessons that require students to become aware of the action of the group as a whole, to maintain the same rhythm (without fascist uniformity) and not collide. There are also neurological lessons, such as the various versions of 'Bell Hand', where the pulsing of one hand affects the whole nervous system, as well as lessons seemingly moving just the eyes or using only attention shifts and the imagination. The ATMs are a starting point and, once familiar with the Method, a practitioner can invent new lessons around the same principles. What these principles are will be elaborated in Chapter 4, but the main one is to have no principles! The method works on bringing the student towards an awareness of her habits such that she becomes able to identify through sensing (not just understanding) compulsive movement patterns and can explore other possibilities. At its heart it is engaged with learning how to learn (Feldenkrais 1980). It is a practice that acknowledges multiple bodies through its

engagement with the whole person in her environmental functioning, rather than aiming for one better, idealized body. The potency of FM lies in its adaptability to any practice and any person. It is not for *either* the young *or* the old, the disabled *or* elite performers; it is not for any particular discipline but for all, and also for daily life. It is not general however, but highly specific; specifically adaptable to make any activity a source of learning.

1.4 First approximation: 'self-image'

We act in accordance with our self-image. This self-image - which, in turn, governs our every act - is conditioned in varying degree by three factors: heritage, education, and self-education. (Feldenkrais 1972:3)

Feldenkrais considered 'we live with an image that we created for ourselves' (*Alexander Yanai* 303, vol. 7a:2081)¹⁵. Change is possible because genes and physiology (heritage) do not govern everything; the education one receives and the culture one lives in are not chosen before a certain age, so that leaves self-education as the most accessible area for improvement. In *Awareness Through Movement*, Feldenkrais states that 'self-image consists of four components that are involved in every action: movement, sensation, feeling and thought' (1972:10). He writes, 'A complete self-image would involve full awareness of all the joints in the skeletal structure as well as of the entire surface of the body' (21). This is the kind of mastery possibly only found in supreme martial artists and *was*, in fact, Moshe's ideal, but it is important to remember that he saw self-image as an ongoing process; he writes,

¹⁵ I explain in greater detail what the *Alexander Yanai* (AY) transcripts are in Chapter 4. I cite them hereafter as AY Lesson Number, vol.:page number (where relevant).

'our self-image is never static. It changes from action to action, but these changes gradually become habits; that is, the actions take on a fixed, unchanging character' (11).

Feldenkraisian self-image relates to the discrepancy between how someone actually acts and how they think they act, or to put it another way, the lacunae in a person's self-in-action awareness. Ideally self-image does not become too fixed, but retains the potential for change throughout life and it is only self-image that *can* be changed. Its tendency to become fixed is what Feldenkrais uses as the basis for his method; if habits didn't etch themselves deep in a person's self-image, the method would have no foundation or touchstone from which to work.

Feldenkrais actually used several terms to refer to what has become more commonly known as 'self-image' in FM circles; he also uses 'body-image' and 'body schema' after Schilder, whose work I treat in detail in Chapter 3. It is worth mentioning that an extensive essay collection, published little over a decade ago, *Body-image and Body Schema* (Preester and Knockaert 2005), makes no mention of Feldenkrais and his method. The volume includes chapters from diverse disciplines; philosophy, neuroscience, phenomenology, psychoanalysis and dance scholarship, since, it is argued, the subject of 'the body' needs an interdisciplinary approach. Sheets-Johnstone is the only author included who writes from movement, and the editors highlight that 'neuroscientific studies tend not to investigate the fundamental ways in which self-movement anchors our cognitive and affective lives' (13). Sheets-Johnstone provides some useful background for the primacy of movement (here and 2009, 2011). But, in spite of having experience of Feldenkrais's work, applying the word 'magical' to its effects (1979:24), she does not appear to continue to see it as a source for new knowledge and understanding in her

more recent writing, referring to it only casually. Perhaps her appreciation of it as 'magical' actually shows that she *misunderstands* it and hence rejects it for further investigation.

The practical (and pragmatic) nature of FM, and its outsider status in terms of science and medicine¹⁶, means that its findings and implications are widely ignored in the many academic fields that consider body-image and schema from medical, theoretical and philosophical points of view. I use 'ignored' more in the French sense, 'to be unaware of something', than in the active Anglo-Saxon sense. Doidge's inclusion of a case-study where FM is used for rehabilitation in *The Brain's Way of Healing* (2015) is a rare exception, but this book is destined for the general public rather than being a serious academic study. It has been criticized for presenting recoveries as near miraculous, rather than offering substantial evidence for the efficacy of the 'alternative' approaches it documents. Some of the cases described seem related to the tenacity and capacities of the afflicted to make a leap of faith regarding neuroplasticity (Adams). It is however a fascinating question, although not to be answered here, why years of empirical research by many, many FM and other somatic practitioners are not seen as a viable source of data for theoreticians thinking about body-image¹⁷.

Since self-image is the term which prevails in the FM community and one of the challenges facing FM practitioners involves communicating what the method offers, I want briefly to consider its everyday connotations which relate to how people perceive themselves. People have a positive or negative self-

16 It tends to be lumped in with 'alternative' therapies and 'well-being' practices.

17 While Feldenkrais explicitly cites body-image as a concept and Schilder as a source in his work, many somatic practices draw on it explicitly or implicitly, although the language used varies. See F.M. Alexander, G. Alexander, Hanna, Rolf, Todd, Sweigard, and, for an overview of these and others practices, Hanlon-Johnson.

image; they perceive themselves to be fat or thin, attractive or unattractive, strong or weak and so on¹⁸. These impact on self-image as intended by Feldenkrais but are not of its essence. I think it is important to bear in mind the potential for misunderstanding or partial understanding when using the term 'self-image', and to remain aware of the implied nuances when using the term.

The word 'self' is a potential diversion from the relationality at the heart of Feldenkrais's 'self-image'. Without considering all the conceptual histories of 'self', the self of Feldenkrais's self-image is certainly broader than the everyday self of 'selfish', 'self-centred', 'self-indulgent', 'self-interest' and also what might appear to be more positive hyphenations like 'self-confident' or 'self-possessed'. All these point to a rupture with that which is not self, rather than giving a sense of continuity between self and not-self. These are selves which you can do things for and against rather than selves deeply enmeshed with world and other selves; in them there is little sense of exchange between self and not-self. The attention to 'self' FM asks for becomes meaningful only when this is an enworlded, intersubjective self. Through attention to movement leading to a greater sense of one's self-image, Feldenkrais claims that the person 'grasps that his small world and the great world around are but one and that in this unity he is no longer alone' (1972:54). He clearly states that 'regard for the self will have to be relegated to second place', continuing, 'Unless a stage is reached at which self-regard ceases to be the main motivating force, any improvement achieved will never be sufficient to satisfy the individual'. He is not talking about serving society or altruism however, but action; 'as a man grows and improves, his entire existence centers increasingly on *what* he does and how, while *who* does it becomes of ever decreasing

¹⁸ As explored in the national press by, for example, Wiseman.

importance' (19) (his italics). If an ethics can be said to stem from Feldenkrais's concept of self-image, it arises first out of awareness which requires practice in self-observation, leading to potent action, rather than an outward assessment of circumstances in the world. Feldenkraisian awareness is multi-directional, directed at least both outwards and inwards, and ideally diffused. Given this, I find the term 'person-image' more accurate, although for the sake of clarity I use 'self-image' when referring to Feldenkrais's work and writing.

The 'image' of 'self-image' is also misleading and a testimony to the dominance of visual models in Western culture and latterly more broadly in human society. Berger's seminal *Ways of Seeing* (1972) confronts this dominance head-on, illuminating the ubiquity of images since the dawn of their easy reproduction. An example from philosophy might be Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on vision in his phenomenology of perception, which Irigaray critiques as 'overpowering and acting as a model for all other perceptual relations, [which] submits them to a phallic economy in which the feminine figures as a lack or a blind spot' (Grosz 1994:104)¹⁹. Irigaray hints at the need for a multi-modal view of perception, less focused on the pointed, phallic gaze, and more on an emergent mixed palette of experience. Sheets-Johnstone also criticizes the use of image in the term 'body-image' for its visual connotation as well as referring to an absence and to 'some *thing*' (2005:216). Several FM practitioners contrast mirror image with self-image, where self-image is something sensed from within rather than seen from without (Galeota-Wozny, Scott). Scott cites the Narcissus myth that seems to be about self-image but is only about the visual aspect of it. Self-image in FM refers to the inner sense.

¹⁹ I have engaged with Irigaray only through Grosz, an important source for me relating to Schilder.

Johnson argues for what he calls 'image schemata'; the patterns of movement, object manipulation and perceptual interaction which organize human experience such that there are no abstract meanings; all meaning is derived from the concrete, lived experience of being in the world (xix-xx). Put simply, what seem to be images or concepts are always deeply connected to movement²⁰. This meets up with Sheet-Johnstone's argument for the 'primacy of movement' which makes the case from an evolutionary point of view for movement being the basis of consciousness and hence of images and concepts (2007, 2011). Johnson's image schemata are a useful adjunct to Feldenkrais's self-image in that he underlines the notion that 'images' emerge from felt experience; how humans are in their bodies is central to the meanings they produce. Feldenkrais draws special attention to the fact that my image of 'verticality', for example, is not the same as yours since each is based on our individual experiences of becoming vertical and perceiving vertical things in the world. Thanks to this, a critical space opens up where movement can be used to explore the variations in shared images and concepts. Image schemata and self-image are specific to the individual, whilst including enough shared elements such that communication and understanding are possible, but not enough to preclude miscommunication and misunderstanding.

Since, in Feldenkraisian terms, improving self-image involves developing a sense of how my musculoskeletal system can best perform in gravity, if lots of people improve their self-images it should lead to people sharing a more consistent self-image (i.e. one that is more founded in the physical reality of moving in gravity in human form on specific, shared surfaces), thus it should improve social communication and understanding. This is not to say, however,

²⁰ FM trainer, Mara Della Pergola also expresses this idea (37).

that this would lead to an homogenization of people in society; on the contrary according to Feldenkrais, when individuals *do not* go on developing their self-image throughout life 'society comes to be made up of persons increasingly alike in their ways, behaviour and aims' (1972:18). This is due to the individual identifying self-image with value to society and thus overriding his or her organic needs. If organic needs are met (and self-image is therefore relatively full and accurate, remaining open to growth), the person will be able to function creatively and exploit her full human potential.

But there is a twist in the Feldenkraisian aim to clarify self-image since, while an ideal self-image exists according to the laws of physics and biomechanics, this is recognized as unattainable by definition. Perfection might be momentarily experienced but the moment stasis is reached and dynamic change lost, the perfection has gone. Perfection is fleeting and fragile, or, perfection is to be found in constant evolution. The novelty of Feldenkrais's approach to this Heraclitean outlook is to offer a precise method for improvement with no end or goal in mind; the possibilities are always shifting. He likened his method to tuning a piano saying, 'it is much easier to play correctly on an instrument that is in tune than on one that is not' (1972:24). A piano periodically needs tuning and notes themselves have a certain breadth, they are not one-dimensional points, they are only ever more or less right and begin shifting again immediately after tuning. As do human beings. Even on a tuned instrument, there is no limit to how much one can improve one's playing, and tuning is not a one-time affair.

As was typical of a man who was constantly questioning his own thinking and assumptions, according to his biographer, Feldenkrais no longer used the term self-image in the 1980s (he died in 1984) (Reese 2015:294). Perhaps he had considered the limitations and baggage of the words 'self' and

'image'; he frequently alludes to the problematic nature of language as a vehicle for communication and his development of the hands-on modality, FI, was a way to circumvent words and communicate through touch, connecting as directly as possible to the CNS of his students. Maybe the slippery elusiveness of self-image made it seem more useful to talk simply about skeletal awareness, leaving less scope to wonder about self, image and self-image. In the Amherst practitioner training, Feldenkrais said, 'Your skeleton will survive your soul' and announced that his next book would be 'about the skeleton and the future of consciousness' and that 'in the long run, people will have to become skeleton conscious, otherwise their consciousness will not evolve, but will remain muscle conscious or foot conscious. They will not evolve' (Workman)²¹. Unfortunately he didn't get to write that book and his statements are left for us to unpack. He goes on to say; 'The future of the evolvement of consciousness will be to reduce it from the muscle stiffness to the skeleton appreciation'. FM trainer, Yvan Joly, recalls Feldenkrais saying that muscle awareness is emotional and historical whilst skeleton awareness relates more to permanence, stability and harmony with the environment (Workman 00:01:50). There are problems here that I address in Chapter 4.

Self-image remains a central concept in the FM lexicon and it emerges as a useful lens to sharpen a view of how the method speaks to puppetry. Understanding self-image as an ongoing process, not a thing, is fundamental to shifting towards modes of thinking about humans and 'reality' that are non-essentialist, non-objectivist and accommodate ongoing change at all levels.

21 This is an edited video online. Whole resource, *Amherst, 1981, 11*, accessible to FM practitioners from www.feldenkrais.co.uk. Feldenkrais was not a religious man although he was brought up in the Hasidic tradition. He spoke these words in English, which was not his first language.

1.5 First approximation: 'puppetry' and 'material performance'

I use the word puppetry in its broadest sense and see it as an approach to theatre-making rather than a practice strictly involving puppets. Defining puppets or puppetry is not the aim of this thesis, but I need a framework within which to work and to transgress with awareness when appropriate²². Penny Francis describes puppetry as denoting 'the act of bringing to imagined life inert figures and forms (representational or abstract) for a ritual theatrical purpose - for a *performance*' (5) (her italics). Blumenthal writes, 'Whenever someone endows an inanimate object with life force and casts it in a scenario, a puppet is born' (11). They, and others such as Rene Baker (2009:53) suggest that puppetry needs an audience; it does not have an informal social form in the way dance does, or even acting, in the case of storytelling or recounting anecdotes and taking on different people's voices. I would argue however that it *does* take place informally, in child's play and play with children²³, and in other non-performance contexts in very subtle ways; in the way people handle things. This might not seem to be enough to count as 'proto-puppetry', but if puppetry is handling things with heightened awareness and for specific ends, then simply handling things is where it begins. The puppetry training moments that have most resonated with me have begun with simply handling things and bringing awareness to the emergent dialogue between matter and myself (Performance workshops: Baker, Buckmaster, Leith, Soehnle). Writing about the principles of puppetry discerned from a lifetime of work, Basil Jones states, 'One of your most important tasks as a

22 For an overview of the history of writing on puppetry, with excellent bibliographies, see Jurkowski (1988) and Bell (2001). For a more recent medley of voices from the field, see Posner et al.

23 See Winnicott on children and transitional objects (Candlin & Guins 65-79). I refer to something broader than his notion however: touch and handling.

puppeteer is to allow the audience to feel how the world touches the puppet and how the puppet touches those in the world around it' (265), putting touch at the heart of puppetry and how meaning is created for an audience.

Perhaps one of the reasons puppetry has difficulty in being appreciated as a specific art form, or is seen at best as a minor art form, is related to the hidden seed of puppetry in daily life. Handling things is so basic and fundamental to human life; humans become, grow and learn through handling things and moving in the world. The seed of puppetry then is embedded deep in daily and developmental life. It is what children do to know the world, it is what draws them into movement as they go towards and recoil from things, the word 'recoil' suggesting a return to a fetal shape; a developmental movement of the whole self. I would like to add a first step in the art of puppetry to Francis' definition; that of bringing awareness to handling things. The second step then can be 'bringing to imagined life inert figures and forms'; this is done by millions of children daily. Puppetry denotes, then, the act of bringing awareness to handling things in order to bring to imagined life inert figures and forms. Ultimately this might become a performance, but in the context of training, education or therapy, the practice itself brings its own rewards (Salvage, Shön).

Tillis distinguishes virtual from tangible puppets whilst also inferring from Kaplin a definition of the puppet as the site of signified life created by people (178). The creation of computer graphics figures described by Tillis involves creating joints and surfaces to form a figure moved by feeding in information about centres of gravity, arcs of movement for limbs and so on, known as 'inverse-kinematics'. This is similar to the process of designing and making a tangible puppet. However, the process of *manipulation*, as Tillis notes, is different. It is possible to class the process of virtual puppet

manipulation as leaning more towards the analytic and tangible puppet manipulation as leaning more towards the somatic. The virtual puppet might be seen as demanding a primarily mental process, using visual feedback, while the tangible puppet seems to entail a whole person process, using multi-sensory feedback. However, the tangible and the virtual do not sit in complete opposition to each other and it is possible to envisage virtual puppetry that requires refined somatic sensing, such as that produced using motion capture, and tangible puppetry that is controlled or experienced virtually. The Muppets, for example! One of my concerns in this thesis is with the role somatic sensing plays in puppetry; this is easier to grasp in relation to tangible puppetry and I therefore refer primarily to the tangible.

Jurkowski finds that the puppet has progressively moved away from functioning as a fictional theatrical subject to privilege what he calls its real function: that of an object (2000:10). Building on this, puppetry can be seen as moving into its own realm where objects are part of the meshwork, creating and receiving vibrations rather than trying to ape actor theatre or have puppets do the same work as actors. A quirky and amusing 'interview' between 'Noam DePloom' (who 'may or may not represent either Bee Pallomina and/or Lee Henderson') and a puppet (of his/her/their own creation) points up the differences between human and puppet labour in performance work (DePloom). The puppet baldly says, 'the role of the human performer is to embody an idea so that it can be felt, while the role of the puppet performer is to embody an idea in felt' (25). The puppet questions Marina Abramovic's use (stay with me here) of the 'white, European, heterosexual, human body', provoking the question in relation to performance art, 'which body is given agency?' (24). This puppet's own 'body' is non-existent; there is nothing under its smock, which suggests the art of puppetry might be thought of as giving

body to the disembodied, or simply embodying ideas (in felt, or another material, which is expressive in itself)²⁴.

Jurkowski quotes Slonimska saying that, 'The puppet proposes a form of theatre without corporeal elements' (2000:23), but this idea seems to me to come from an era when puppeteers were invisible whereas, in contemporary theatres, they are often visible in some way and what is staged is as much the relationship between all the material elements, or how the puppeteer treats her material, as the puppet itself (see n. 11, this chapter). Piris develops Annie Gilles' concept of 'manipulacting', to refer to situations where not only is the puppeteer visible, but also playing something (not necessarily a character) for the audience (Piris 2012). Jurkowski notes a need to shift from looking at the puppet as a virtual character to looking at the relations between the signs of character and the forces which animate them (2000:113). He uses the term 'opalisation' to describe the double vision of seeing a part of the puppeteer's body both as his and as his puppet's body. He credits Obraztsov with its invention, with his small puppet, Tiapa, cradled to his chest, showing his forearm which the audience also sees as the puppet's bare back (40). There is an area of slippage for puppeteer and audience, where parts of his body are puppet but also himself. In contemporary puppetry there is often no attempt to fool the audience into believing the puppeteer is not present. Part of the pleasure in witnessing this kind of puppetry is derived from seeing the puppeteer navigate the slippage. The human and nonhuman intermingle and change places. The puppeteer learns how to move attention within herself (which is practised in FM) and how to direct movement outwards. I expand on this in chapters 5 and 6.

²⁴ Baixas refers to puppets as 'the imaginary incarnate, in bodily form, switched on' (Blumenthal 101).

Trimingham proposes seeing puppets as affordances to the puppeteer; 'Affordances describe material substance with the extra dimension of use and potential use' (126). If the puppet is an 'affordance' to the puppeteer, a kind of tool as Trimingham suggests, I propose it is a tool of discovery that enables the puppeteer (and her audience) to find out more about what it is to be human. Voicing a more mainstream view, Proschan calls puppets 'objects through which we can project intensified, artistic and often holy speech and action' (Francis 6) but, without losing this meaning, I think puppets are also objects *along which we can sense*. I project into objects, but they also project information from the material world into me. Puppets are the gatekeepers of the inanimate world (Blumenthal 65). Through them I can listen to it, but only as filaments in a broader meshwork; it is not only through my hands that I listen to the inanimate in the puppet, but through my feet that I listen to the inanimate in the floor *and* in the puppet. It is not only the puppet that 'speaks' to me but also the floor, the chair, the table and so on. But only the puppeteered thing, through being a puppet and through my puppeteering, allows me to sense the world *and* to project out through it.

The puppet, unlike a hammer or a needle, says 'I am like you', no matter its form. It can be anthropomorphic or zoomorphic, it can be a man-made object (a cup, a chair...), it can be, or represent, an element from nature (a rock, a tree...), it can even be immaterial or gaseous - a digital image, a shadow, smoke; but from the moment it is puppeteered it becomes part of a shared animate world, whilst also retaining its material status and testifying to a human presence - there is someone behind the animation. This is why puppetry offers a means for listening to nonhumans. Puppeteer, Nenagh Watson, has researched what she calls 'ephemeral animation', where, for example, the wind 'animates' a plastic bag (2015). There is still someone

present *seeing* this without which we could not speak of animation: Watson's imagination is the animator and in a sense this mere posing of a puppetic gaze on objects in the world might be the purest form of puppetry in that it attempts to listen to the material without intervention, although not without what might be termed capture or framing²⁵. There is a similarity in approach to FM, where I listen to movement as it occurs without trying to change it, and puppetry, whether hands-on or off, where I do the same for movement occurring in the object, and for the imaginative associations it provokes.

A useful term which includes puppetry is 'material performance', understood as including performance made with materials, objects and masks as well as puppets (Posner et al.)²⁶. However, it would be more elegant if the term puppetry could hold all of this. In Jos Houben's performance-demonstration, *The Art of Laughter*²⁷, he ridicules the notion of 'physical theatre' saying he has never seen an actor come on stage without his body. A similar comment might be made about material performance; when is performance immaterial, or when does it not have a specific materiality or happen in a particular (material) context? Even with a virtual puppet, or internet project, the experience is always material. Theatre and performance are material in the sense that experiencing is material. However, a conceptual emphasis on the material aspects in terms of process and product is usefully

25 In a similar vein, Peter Schumann recalls seeing 'angels in the drafty streets of NYC who were actually tossed-away wrapping papers, but obviously joyful and superhuman in their ability to brighten up masses of dark stinky air stuck between high-rises' (50).

26 Jurkowski uses the term 'material theatre' to refer specifically to theatres of materials, as opposed to objects or multimedia (2000:130).

27 Live performance at the Shaw Theatre, London, 2016.

suggested in the term 'material performance'²⁸.

Gross identifies the puppet as 'an object in performance, an ally and challenger of the living body of the actor'. FM might also be described as challenging the living body. Gross claims the puppet 'as idea, as a piece of our mental furniture, a tool of thought, a spur to reimagine parts of our ordinary life, our play and work' (Posner xxiii), acknowledging a puppet is not only an object, but an idea, a tool, and, I would add, a practice. FM too is partly a tool and practice of thought to reimagine parts of our ordinary life. In this, puppetry can be seen as an approach which may or may not give rise to something that looks like puppetry. Gerard Marx muses on the puppet as a functional tool; 'the body outside of the body, an *exosomatic organ*, to quote Karl Popper's beautiful description of the instrument' (229). The functionality of the puppet as tool asks for a functionality of the somatic organ in relation to it as an exosomatic one. The term 'exosomatic organ' itself hints at the way in which the tool infiltrates and is combined into the person-image; it is only exosomatic in that it *can* become a separate body again, but, in use, it becomes included in some way in the person-image of the puppeteer. In the following chapter I recount how my interest in person-image and somatic practice in conjunction with puppetry emerged.

28 Its Western roots lie with Edward Gordon Craig who called for 'artists' of the theatre whose work included all aspects of it, from acting to stage management to design and directing (2008). In the few productions he was able to mount according to his strict requirements, and in his writings and designs, he had a huge impact on twentieth century theatre. His emphasis on all sides of theatre-making sees the material aspects as equally important as the text; Craig promotes a shift from putting on plays to theatre-making as it is conceived today by those making material performance, who add only the specificity of human-nonhuman dialogue as generative principle.

1.6 Methodology, structure and case studies

Feldenkrais considered that there are four components of human action always present - thinking, feeling, moving and sensing. The simultaneity of these connects us deeply into the meshworks of people, environments, things, elements, animals and systems - humans and nonhumans, animate and inanimate, 'real', 'abstract' and discursive, in which we live. Having danced around the problem of how to talk about FM and puppetry together (both enormous and rich areas themselves), I have come to the conclusion that the key is in person-image. The base note in this thesis is my practice and understanding of FM which becomes almost a methodology. It is hard to write about directly, so my approaches are indirect as befits the 'method': they are approximations.

Rather than a linear approach, progress by approximations allows me to involve and draw on a wide breadth of material. Since I assume a complexity view of an emergent meshwork, no territory is out-of-bounds. I cross practical experience and theory, aiming to illuminate the utility of the concept of person-image. I write about training (of myself and others), experiencing and making performance, performing, puppeteering, practising FM, mothering, thinking, writing, the past, now and the future. In FM, a methodology of approximations means you can start anywhere but move forwards by making meaningful connexions for yourself or your student in relation to that starting point. Approximations are small steps that each function to clarify an idea or movement. Approximations can complement and counter each other. Nothing is treated as completely irrelevant; anything might illuminate the movement or argument. Which is not to say that everything does. There is still a need for a coherent meshwork of approximations, like the spinning of a tale. Meaning however is both found and made; this is the dialogue of approximations.

An example: In FI, I roll a supine man's head and it moves more easily to the the right than to the left. He has right knee and neck pain. Over the course of 30 minutes, I show him that he is stopping his head from moving left, and he can choose to do this or not do it. Some of the approximations I explore to clarify this are: moving a shoulder forward and rolling his head or stopping it from rolling; showing him what happens to his ability to roll his head when he fixes his pelvis or allows it to move; showing him how allowing his sternum and ribs to move affects his ability to turn his head; with him sitting up and standing, I show him he can turn more easily to look over his left shoulder when his shoulder, spine, ribs, sternum, pelvis and legs are involved; while he walks, I ask him to sense how his walk is affected when he allows or does not allow his head to turn to the left, and how this affects his knee pain. Each movement I propose or thing I ask him to notice is an approximation.

In ATM, a first approximation might be observing how you can take hold of your right foot with your right hand while lying on your back. A second might be rolling to the right holding your foot with your hand. And then you may make many more approximations of rolling to the side like this, looking at your foot or bringing your face towards your knee or straightening your leg. Each of these variations is an approximation where your focus is on a different aspect of the movement or part of yourself. Auxiliary movements not directly related to the main theme might be used at any point. For example, in the rolling lesson, an auxiliary movement might be lifting your head with your left hand while you bring your right hand and foot together in front of and away from you. When you come back to rolling to the side, you may find yourself suddenly sitting up, because your back got more involved and if you roll holding your foot like that, bringing your head towards your knee without impeding the movement, you will sit up (because you have a skeleton).

My approximations in Chapters 1 and 2 provide reasons for connecting areas of thought and practice that do not normally sit together. These are theoretical, practical and personal. From here I move to the history of the notion of 'body-image': Chapter 3 engages with the work of Paul Schilder, from which Feldenkrais develops 'self-image'. This serves to ground my exploration of Feldenkrais's work, but also reveals avenues from Schilder that Feldenkrais did not explore and these prove interesting in relation to puppetry and performance. My choice to start an approximation with Schilder yields more than expected then. An FI or ATM lesson might also have an unexpected outcome. I start with student's head and his knee pain is gone. Or I learn how to roll to sit holding my foot and when I stand up my balance has also improved. Since a methodology of approximations is not goal-based or end-gained, it happily encourages and accommodates the emergence of fresh discoveries.

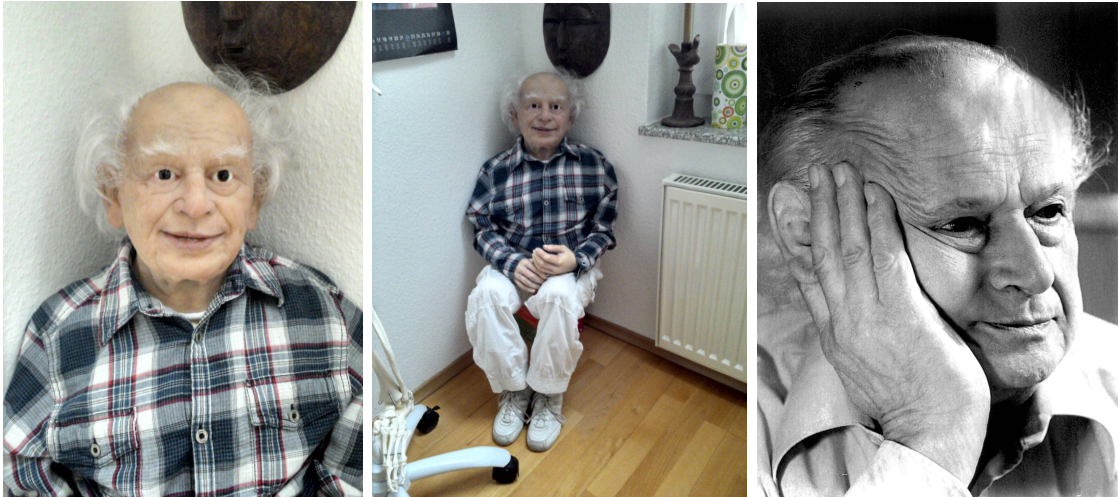
Chapter 4 takes a close look at Feldenkrais's use of the concept of self-image and begins to open out towards puppetry. This approximation brings to light the need to problematize and maintain a critical distance from FM. At this point in the thesis I choose two further facets to explore in order to shed light on how the concept of person-image clarifies the conversation between FM and material performance. Chapter 5 considers person-image in puppetry training and in relation to a broader emancipated education. In this chapter more than any other, I use 'auxiliary movements'. I look to Lecoq, Silk and Kleist as indirect conduits towards thinking about the practice I call Awareness Through Puppetry. Chapter 6 uses a selection of performance case studies to explore aspects of person-image in performance from a puppetic point of view. This takes the argument into the realm of performance analysis in order to demonstrate the potency of thinking in terms of person-image. Chapter 7

concludes the thesis in a final drawing together of lines and an indication of directions that might be pursued out of this particular knot.

A methodology of approximations means that there is no final point or destination but a synthesis of many facets which gives a richer, more mobile and agile place from which to think, move, feel and sense. This is the case for a FM lesson and, I hope, for this thesis.

Chapter 2

Personal grounding



Figs. 1 & 2 A puppet of Moshe Feldenkrais made by Janusz Dembinski for practitioner, Hermann Klein, who teaches FM to puppeteers at HDMK. Image © Hermann Klein.

Fig. 3 Moshe Feldenkrais. Image © Feldenkrais Guild UK.

2.1 Why connect Feldenkrais Method and puppetry? An anecdote

I have asked myself this question many times, some days with despair as Jurkowski whispers over my shoulder, 'The puppet opposes the human' (1988:52). Why on earth connect a practice about moving the embodied self with a practice about moving inanimate objects? Aren't they very *unlike* each other¹? The growing presence of FM practitioners in puppetry trainings suggests however that there is a fruitful connection to be made. And surely it is not just the obvious; move better, move puppets better, and avoid job-related strains, pains and injuries.

1 I take heart from Anne Bogart's call for theatre artists to do what takes time and 'what is absolutely the hardest. Every day.' (Margolies 2009:18). FM and puppetry both take time and are demanding. Self-image is a hard concept. Why not bring it all together?

In hindsight, this thesis owes a debt to a puppeteer named Athena². We were two of five participants in a week-long masterclass with Christopher Leith in 2007. She was largely self-taught, although she had also trained on the Puppet Barge; she made marionettes and performed with them on the streets. In that intense week of hanging around with our puppets with Zen-like tenacity³, sensitive to whatever emerged, Athena expressed a view that puppetry could change the world; if only everyone did a bit of puppetry the world would be a better place⁴. At the time I was in the fourth year of my FM practitioner training and was just coming to appreciate that Feldenkrais thought his method could change the world; if only everyone did a bit of FM the world would be a better place. At lunch time, Leith asked us to pay attention to how our shoes wanted to be put on and how our feet met the pavement outside. To paraphrase him quoting an AT teacher, he said, 'Any gesture towards a thing or a person which does not allow for feedback from that thing or person is an aggressive act'. He was teaching us to wait for movement to emerge in our string puppets, an idea echoed by puppeteer, Schönbein, whose work I examine in Chapter 6; 'the life emerges in the stillness' (Gross ch. 11). This chimed with the FM training I was about to finish, where we were encouraged to wait for patterns of movement to emerge in our partners and let our hands 'know' what to do⁵.

2 Athena Maschi (née Gilbert), currently of Bus King Theatre.

3 One of Leith's main references was Herrigel's *Zen and the Art of Archery*.

4 Puppetry as an unobtrusive, seemingly unthreatening art-form also has a history in contexts where the fact that it is easily hidden has allowed it a subversive life; another mode of world-changing. Ronnie Burkett's 1999 show, for example, *Tinka's New Dress* centres around ghetto puppeteers in Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia; the anti-Hitler content puppets got away with is mentioned by Malíková (41).

5 François Combeau's expression (FM practitioner trainer).

The more I practised both things, the more I saw them as connected. Both were about paying attention to sensation and to tiny emergent movements. In FM, these movements were my own and those of my students. At its most ambitious, FM is about human potential but for me the humanism of FM is both its strength and its weakness; although implying a broader ecological connection, I felt it needed reframing in the light of contemporary politico-ecological thought in order to have the potential to be powerful beyond individuals or small networks of individuals. Its wider implications can be lost when it is seen as part of the outwardly apolitical 'well-being' and 'self-help' movements, which it often is, and this is a positioning I strongly contend. While FM might make you feel better, it is a rigorous awareness practice in which it is necessary to confront your experience, whatever that may be. The puppeteer listens to the movement of her puppet, and then follows. She proposes and accepts. As in the Keith Johnstone exercise and basic improvisation tenet, she says 'yes and...' to her puppet (1999:36). But, for me, the animism latent in a certain way of looking at puppetry which assigns agency to objects needs grounding in and through the human being, literally through hands and feet, so that an awareness of the flow between thing and human situated in a specific context can emerge, rather than a mystical focus on the 'soul' of things. This is not to say that there are no FM practitioners who conceive of their work within a broader framework (see, for example, Kampe and Yeatman), nor that all puppeteers have some kind of devotional relationship with their puppets, or with puppeteering (as Athena seemed to have)⁶. What interests me is how

⁶ Basil Jones of Handspring writes specifically of the 'devotional state', making it number 1 of 11 puppetry principles. For him, it is a trance state one may need to enter in order to endure the physical pain of puppeteering. In it 'you will always treat your puppet as a verb' and find that you follow the other principles he outlines (264). In a somatic puppetry practice, however, one might hope that pain was limited and the demands on the puppeteer more akin to the endurance demanded of an ultra-marathon runner, for example. Using shifts of attention in relation to person-image can assist this; this is addressed further in Chapter 5.

theorizing these two areas might reveal how they can feed each other and how, together, they offer a unique and rich practice. I propose that investigating the Feldenkraisian notions of self-image, imagination and awareness in relation to puppetry and material performance opens up wider questions of agency and impact in the world at large.

In spite of my hunch and sense that FM and puppetry can and should speak to each other, how was not immediately obvious and indeed I have sensed a resistance from each to meet the other. FM is about human 'Awareness Through Movement' and 'Functional Integration'; the names of its two modes of practice. It is concerned with human thought, feeling, sensing and movement, with human action, behaviour and functioning, with live, animate beings. Puppetry can be many things, particularly in contemporary performance, but usually involves things that are inanimate, not alive, and often involves 'bringing them to life', animating them or endowing them with some kind of life. In live beings the movement is generated from the inside (or is it?) and in things that are not alive it is generated from the outside (or is it?). The bracketed questions are the reason for this thesis. In FM, it can feel as though one is creating the context for a person to come back to life, through one's voice or hands from the outside. In considering how movement happens in both the animate and inanimate, it becomes clear that it is more useful (and accurate) to smudge the distinction between the two and accept that aspects of both can be found in the other.

2.2 Second approximation: Feldenkrais Method

I first heard about FM in 1994 from a clown friend. From her, I understood it involved animal movement! Now I understand why it was difficult

to describe. (And I wasn't completely wrong about the animal movement; FM explores developmental movement, some of which connects back to human evolutionary predecessors, for example, crawling patterns and undulations.) Soon after, I did some dance classes with Gill Clarke who used bits of FM. I recall becoming increasingly aware of my skeleton, until it felt as if it was walking itself down the street; I was free, tagging along for the ride. It was effortless. I didn't dwell on it, although I often rocked from my heels, pelvis and shoulder girdle as it felt good and seemed to 'realign' me. The name 'Feldenkrais' tucked itself away in my brain and waited. As the tapestry of my life grew the effects of these classes seemed more remarkable.

My next encounter with FM was in a workshop with Yves Marc of Théâtre de Mouvement in 2002. He and his collaborator, Claire Heggen, had worked with Feldenkrais in one of his long summer workshops at Peter Brook's Bouffes du Nord in Paris in the 1970s. Themes from ATM lessons were woven into in their teaching process (see Fredricksson). I began to understand this intelligent movement method and as a performer I felt I began to access expressive potential and freedom I had not been aware of previously.

Just after this I found myself horizontal for a few weeks with a leg injury after a big jump in a cold rehearsal room. At the ripe old age of 30, after a decade of gung-ho physical risk-taking, I was flat on my back with time to think about how I was using myself. I thought I needed to work more intelligently since youth was no longer on my side. I remembered Feldenkrais – I had bought a book of his after the workshop with Marc. Written in 1949, *Body and Mature Behaviour* is Moshe's first book explicitly laying out his method and its philosophical and scientific underpinnings. It is not an easy read and the French translation is particularly dense. Once I was up and about,

I searched for classes and was lucky to arrive at Myriam Pfeffer's door; she was one of Feldenkrais's original thirteen assistants.

Her classes were slow and peppered with her deceptively simple and often humorous questions and remarks ('What is the expression on your face now? Make sure you keep your jaw clenched...'). It was a huge change (and challenge) for me to lie on a soft carpet in a warm space and focus on my experience of small movements with no obvious purpose in mind. I had been used to jumping, springing, hanging off ropes, somersaulting; often working for imminent performances in ad hoc rehearsals spaces with cold, hard floors and no heating. I found it hard to do less, take rest, have a break, do less, rest, pause, do less... and I often fell asleep at first, but little by little I sensed my movement afresh. The dynamic and attention to detail were very different to the way theatre-practitioner Marc used the method, which now seemed more pragmatic. He had cherry-picked a few ideas and related them to his subject, but his teaching rhythm retained the dynamism of a theatre workshop. This is not to say FM lessons are never dynamic, but the focus *in the lesson* is the movement itself; afterwards the student can, and is likely to, contextualize in her own life and according to her needs. I am not criticizing Marc; he was not claiming to teach ATM. I have now used FM myself in the context of giving theatre workshops, and I use and teach it differently to when I teach it on its own. I would argue that theatre students benefit from 'pure' as well as tailored ATMs since the tailoring removes some of the openness which is part of the method's strength⁷. This might seem to reduce the relevance of my thesis! But I

⁷ The subject of pure versus tailored ATMs in performer training comes up often; it was discussed for instance in the Bath conference in 2015 and at a practitioners' Guild day led by Victoria Worsley, on FM for actors in Apr. 2017. A recent group of Rose Bruford acting students to whom I gave movement classes including 'pure' ATMs and Lecoq-inspired work, expressed their frustration sometimes at not knowing where something was going or why we were doing it, and at there being no demonstration. Interestingly however, most said that this way of working had grown on them (over the course of a term) and, in the end, they saw the benefits and changes in themselves.

hope to show that parallel activities within a somatic-inflected puppetry practice make it more than the sum of its parts and that it is not only puppetry that benefits from FM, but FM which benefits from puppetry.

After a few classes with Myriam, I enrolled to train as a practitioner. At the start of the four-year training I felt I was finally learning about movement properly, after all the physical disciplines I had practised. I didn't realize at the time that the method wasn't restricted to learning about the physical movement of my body; it was more far-reaching than that. It was only once in the training that I began to hear the term self-image, and it seemed so elusive a concept, I didn't dwell on it. I kept a loose sense of it as that to which I was able to bring my awareness as I moved, which was often very limited given my riotous mind.

What was I learning that was new? Or how was I learning so that it felt new? It was the phenomenological precision that astounded me. A precision felt from the inside, known from experience, which makes it very powerful. It is in stark contrast to all the methods and classes I have met before or since. There is no external form to copy, no artificial dynamism, no vague concept of energy; in fact there are no concepts, at least none that are not sensed from within. Only questioning. I enjoyed acrobatics, contact improvisation and aikido because there was a functionality to them; I appreciated the mechanics of movement and the fact you had to do things a certain way for them to work. FM was movement as dynamic physics taken a step further by looking at how each person integrates function. There was novelty in diving into the experience of a functional movement like getting up from the floor and fleshing out my image of myself doing it so it became clearer, more efficient and pleasurable. Efficiency is a slightly strange concept to apply to movement. It conjures up robots, or ergonomic production lines, but efficiency in FM is

movement that feels effortless and spontaneous in the moment it happens, permitting an aesthetic appreciation of it. I understand this to be what Feldenkrais meant by awareness.

FM asks students to explore many developmental movements so that, as conscious adults, they have the chance to rediscover movements they first experienced as babies on the way to learning to roll, crawl, walk, talk, run and so on. The growing human learns approximatively and moves on; this is the price for individual rather than species learning. These ways of moving are learnt, from a survival point of view, in order to go towards and away from things in the environment (Sheets-Johnstone 2007); this idea is present in FM lessons, which are as much about orientation as about coordination and timing. People also move for pleasure, for the joy of moving, and this is as important to our survival as more strictly functional movement; the two are inseparable. Feldenkrais notes that people are not born knowing up from down, or right from left. These abstract concepts are learnt through an embodied process, sometimes not very effectively, particularly in the case of left and right. Feldenkrais introduces many variations in his lessons to reproduce the trial and error process of the baby. He uses the concept of self-image, or how one is aware of oneself in movement, as a tool for clarifying one's actions. Through sensing how one's skeleton functions in gravity, through forming a sensorial-mental image of it, and through sensing, observing and pushing and pulling through the bones of colleagues, skeletal awareness is developed throughout the training.

FM emphasizes a person's entanglement with the lifeworld; it is about situated movement and function (in which I include pleasure), and not about the body or movement for its own sake. FM does not deal with bodies, but people, including all the lines in the meshwork along which each person moves.

2.3 Second approximation: self-image

When I began to explore FM in depth in 2003, I found self-image a tricky concept, both to understand intellectually and to sense. I was asked in lessons to sense what was included in my self-image, or how complete it was. How three-dimensional is my self-image? Are my arms connected to my centre, or are they like separate appendages? Where do they start? How much of my back is included in my self-image? Into which parts do I breathe? How many of my vertebrae are included? My fifth thoracic vertebra? My left fourth toe? Do I have an accurate sense of the thickness of my chest, the width of my hips, the width of my lips? How much of myself is involved in the movement? These kinds of questions danced around, circling in on the elusive self-image. Whilst they are unanswerable in absolute terms, it is possible to get a sense of how much of myself is involved in my movement, and it is possible for a practitioner to see how much of a person is involved in her movement (another way of saying included in her self-image).

There seemed to be two modes for knowing something about one's self-image, one through feeling or sensing what was going on, which applied more when doing movement, and one through the imagination, which applied both when not moving and simply observing oneself, and when imagining movement. (There is always some movement present in a living person, from her breathing.) For me it was easier to sense how much of myself or which parts of myself were involved in an actual movement than it was to sense my vertebrae, or where my arms and legs were in relation to my mid-line, or whatever I was asked to pay attention to, whilst lying, sitting or standing relatively still, or to have a sense of my whole self-image in movement in my imagination. It still is, to a lesser degree. Imagining movement, which involves

imagining one's self-image in movement, is a strategy used in FM but felt difficult for me.

'Scanning' in a FM lesson involves bringing awareness to yourself whilst relatively motionless, in any resting position (lying, sitting or even standing). Sensing yourself in movement, you are paying attention to where the movement is flowing kinematically and where it is getting stuck, or how far you are doing what you think you're doing, or how accurate your sense of your self-image is. Puppeteer, Jones, refers to all 'unintended movement' as 'the equivalent of noise' (264) in the performance. The concept of noise disturbing or hindering a movement is familiar in FM; Della Pergola refers to the process where 'bones come to light while muscles become silent' (36). But how do you stop the unintended? By imagining without doing, the motor schema for doing the movement is engaged. The decoupling proposed by Feldenkrais taps into an understanding of the adult brain primarily as an organ of inhibition, not of excitation⁸. So that in order to perform a kinematically pure and precise action, be it running, throwing a ball or playing the piano, all the extraneous actions must be inhibited rather than actively doing the action itself in an efficient and precise way. It is a matching of intention and action. This process of identifying and inhibiting the extraneous movement in action is also explored in Alexander Technique (AT), on which Feldenkrais drew (Reese 2015:195-7, 420-4). AT teacher, Lucia Walker, recently shared this distinction with me; FM is Awareness Through Movement while AT is Movement Through Awareness. While this is perhaps too simplistic (there is a lot of 'awareing' going on in FM in scans, in relation to self-image and using the imagination), it highlights FM's use of movement. I would argue that FM goes in both directions (from

⁸ An understanding shared, and arguably pioneered by F. M. Alexander, founder of AT.

movement to awareness to movement), while AT is more mono-directional (from awareness to movement).

Feldenkrais's approach was to propose hundreds of movement variations offering insight into different and unexplored facets of self-image; options. The breadth of propositions offsets the intrinsic difficulties involved in sensing one's self-image and imagining movement mentioned above; through exploring variations in movement and moving one's attention to different parts of oneself as one moves or imagines movement, the process of fleshing out self-image is oiled and its elusiveness demystified. Understanding that there are only ever approximations in a never-ending process serves to make the task seem less impossible and any gain in one's sense of self-image valuable; one's curiosity need never be dampened since there is always more detail to discover.

Of a tree, Ingold claims, 'the tree is not an object at all, but a certain gathering together of the threads of life' (2010:4). Self-image is also a gathering together of the threads of life, including the perceptions and materialities of the living person. Self-image is growing and ageing, changing as the person changes. Self-image is like an image of a moment in the meshwork, capturing the intermingling at one point in time. A way to check in with the emerging moment. A useful thing, but one to hold lightly, a fragile, mutable thing. It (and therefore people) share incompleteness with puppets, conceived as partial, imperfect, reduced, fragmented (Gross) sometimes a scrap, a discontinuity (Barthes). Self-image is as much about self-in-world-image as self-in-self-image; the meshwork comes into play.

Thing interlude #1: Teddy

A tiny tale of person-image between matter and movement.



Fig. 4 Teddy and me around 1975. Still from cinefilm shot by Karl Fredricksson. Image © Kristin Fredricksson.



Fig. 5 Teddy in 2013. Image © Kristin Fredricksson.

This teddy is my unconscious self-portrait. But I am only aware of this because I have acquired an intimate proprioceptive knowledge of my self-image and organization through FM. My left leg is my support leg; I tend to carry more weight on it when standing, even when I think I am standing neutrally. This tendency has been offset since doing FM, but my pattern is still there. I have a slight C curve in my spine towards my right. I have had problems with my right hip and right shoulder; if I lie on my back I can feel my right shoulder blade doesn't tuck under me comfortably in the way my left one does and my right leg and foot lie in a completely different way to my left. Teddy's right side is also withered and would be less useful to him than his left if he had a skeleton; forces would not pass through it in a simple and direct way and the movement would get stuck. The funny thing is that carrying teddy under my right arm for all those years is possibly partly why my right side is stiffer and less available for movement now, and as a result teddy has become my self-portrait. Who made who? Did I make teddy that way, or did he make me? Both. Teddy has acted on me, and I on him. It's a dance. I am also teddy's self-portrait!

I ask the acting students in a movement class at drama school to make Plasticene models of themselves near the start of term. One individual makes a model of himself sitting slumped, complete with X-box device in hand and tablet on the floor beside him. The other students and he agree that the imprint of these objects is still clearly visible in the way he stands, chest caved in, on its way back to his slumped position. He includes them in his vision of himself; they are intimately bound up with his self-image. Things carve spaces out of us that we might otherwise also have available to move into, in performance and in life.

*

2.4 Second approximation: puppetry and material performance

Puppets and objects affect self-images, self-images affect puppets and objects. Use and manipulation are at least two-way activities, there is no simple doing to, no more with things than with people. There is no action-reaction, but a multi-directional intermingling. A deep ongoing process. The understanding of self-image that Feldenkrais develops is precise and subtle, at once abstract and concretely experienced; it corresponds to the combination of abstraction, or essence, and material reality found in puppets (Barthes, Jurkowski).

While I have not constructed practice to carry out my research, it is rooted in, and constantly refers to, my practice and experience in both theatre and FM. Material stuff is what incites me to make (a show or a puppet); a vibration along the lines of the meshwork. The following story illustrates my understanding of the two-way traffic in practising puppetry and the specificity of a puppetic approach.

In 1998, at the Lecoq School, I made a costume out of dead cat skins that I found in a hold-all in an alleyway near Passage Brady, the place to get a cheap curry in Paris. The skins were revolting and musty, with gaping eye-holes and empty paws. I hot-glued them to tights worn on my legs and torso; it hurt and I felt slightly mad and queasy as I did it, alone, late at night, in my *chambre de bonne*. The scene we performed the next day as part of the weekly presentation of 'autocours' work was largely improvised and lasted a few minutes. The theme was what Lecoq called 'mystère', where we explored worlds of fantasy and fairy, myth and magic. I entered a trance; the performance was wild but controlled, I could not remember exactly what had happened afterwards and now, 19 years later, I have a hazy recollection of

writhing movement from a kind of downward dog yoga position and half-chanted, half-mewed and screeched vocalizations. The piece was well-received (rare for Lecoq) and immediately after listening to his critique, which was always given while we were still on stage, I ran out, stripped off the sweaty cat skins, and stood under a hot shower for a long, purgative washing away of what felt like the cat revenge that had come through me.

All this might sound like the over-the-top imaginings of an impulsive young student, but shamanistic possessions involving masks or magical totems in non-Western cultures have frequently been described in anthropological accounts and addressed in writing on theatre and puppetry (e.g. Artaud, Darkowska-Nidzgorska, Johnstone, Blumenthal). Francis acknowledges the ongoing importance of the spiritual and ritualistic aspects of puppetry (1). In the West the ecstatic cult of Dionysis evolved into masked drama which is widely seen as the birth of Western theatre. Puppeteers and mask performers from contemporary Western culture frequently talk about being possessed by their puppets and masks and about not fully controlling the making or performing of them (e.g. Schönbein⁹); the puppet or mask demands to be let out of the material and performed in a certain way. These things seem to have strange powers. Ventriloquist, Nina Conti, says the puppet speaks her unconscious mind, voicing the things she normally censors in herself (*Nina Conti*). I've also heard the story (I think from John Wright, but I may misremember) of a student clown who went to the toilet with her nose on and couldn't figure out how to get out of the cubicle. I would argue that this is down to a full and attentive awareness of, and sensitivity to, the subtleties of the dance between materiality and movement. Placing materiality at the core of possession does not diminish its power or disconnect it from imagination.

9 And many in conversation.

I lost myself in the cats, but I found something else in listening to them, or through them. Their power came from their materiality and my reaction to it; physical material led to a moment of theatre. I did not reflect on what to do with the skins. I had the urge to glue them on and just did what came from being in them. I had recently seen François Truffaut's *L'Enfant Sauvage* (1970) for the first time, about the attempt to tame a child who has grown up in the wilderness. Perhaps it led me to want to embody the wild child and the cat-suit was a body mask that enabled this. An interaction with raw materials produces puppets and masks and they call many of the shots along the way to theatrical performance; the material suggests the form (which might be its raw state) and the form suggests modes of play and expression. Meeting the materials is like meeting the wild child in the woods and trying to tame her. The taming works more or less, the puppeteer or mask-wearer is wilded more or less, and the theatrical event is the telling of the story of this meeting.

Working in a puppetic way gives me access to things I would not be able to sense or hear otherwise. Sometimes, but not always, the balance of power tips and a state of trance occurs. There is always an element of possession; you cannot do whatever you want with a puppet or thing. It affects you. Not a metaphysical possession but a very physical one which emerges from the puppet's materiality. In Posner et al., puppets are described as realities which 'dance the manipulator' (Foley), do-ers rather than objects (Parker-Starbuck), shapers and makers, not mimics and mirrors (Posner) and 'the human infusion of independent life into lifeless, but not agentless, objects in performance' (5). The fact that objects are not agentless is important; they are part of the meshwork which enables agency while not actually agents in themselves. Bell reminds us that Lehmann argues puppetry has always been postdramatic in

that it 'has always thrived independently of a dependence on dramatic text' (12). Puppetry is a theatre *of* the material world, an art form which expresses unmouthable things about the intermingling of humans and nonhumans, about what people do in and to the world and what it does in and to us. Puppetry is of the meshwork.

To define 'material performance' or puppetry as that which springs from an encounter with physical material however would be both too restrictive and too vague; theatre where puppets, masks and materials play an important role might just as well start from a story, a play, a place, an idea, an improvisation and so on, depending on the artist-maker, and much visual art might also be said to arise from a meeting with some material or other. However, the sensitive encounter with material, or the nonhuman, is central to the processes both of making *and* performing material theatre so that it stages, to quote Margolies, 'the process of humans noticing and responding to fundamental material properties, as well as the variety of possible interactions between humans and the material world' (2014:322). It is about the relationships, about witnessing and listening. I suggest these relationships can be enriched through somatic awareness, so that the puppeteer is not only operating through sensitivity to her materials but also to herself. What might somatic education have to do and say about material performance and vice versa, and about the variations in the hard and soft realities we experience?

Trimingham, we saw, suggests puppets are 'affordances' to the puppeteer. Ingold criticizes Gibsonian affordances as a 'sclerotisation of the environment,' saying,

We need a different understanding of movement: not a casting about the hard surfaces of a world in which everything is already laid out, but an issuing along with things in the very processes of their generation;

not the *trans-port* (carrying across) of completed being, but the *production* (bringing forth) of perpetual becoming' (2011:12) (his italics).

FM could also be criticized for over-emphasizing the 'hard surfaces of the world' with its constant reference to finding support from the ground through the skeleton. However, in FM it is recognized that the ground is used or not used to produce kinematically pure movement. For humans, it does not afford the same potential for every user; its potential is completely open, as with the puppet. Exploring the non-obvious ways of becoming of the puppet (and not just its affordances) can be a rich creative seam which expands its vocabulary¹⁰.

Kaplin sets out a classification system focusing on the puppet/performer dynamic using distance and ratio as quantities. Distance refers to 'the level of separation and contact between the performer and the object being manipulated', going from performer and object being one to 'psychic, body, remote, and temporal degrees of contact'. His order reads: performer/object - actor - character role - masks - body puppets - hand puppets - rod puppets - marionettes - remote-controlled figures - shadow figures - animated figures - computer generated figures - virtual performer/object. As the space between what is performing and the performer grows, direct agency diminishes, to the point at which it is no longer possible for the performer to receive somatic feedback from the thing itself but only visual feedback (from the remote-controlled figure). After this point time *and* space separate the manipulated from the manipulator, hence the feedback loop is further loosened and

¹⁰ In 2003, I was Assistant Director on *Drames Brefs 2* by Philippe Minyana with Cie. Chès Panses Vertes. We worked with puppeteer and puppet coach, Philippe Rodriguez-Jorda, who asked the puppeteers to explore the puppets simply as objects, without paying attention to their figurative qualities. This opened up many new avenues of expression with them.

potentially becomes more intellectual. While somatic awareness may be useful further up this scale, my focus is mainly on the part from mask up to and including marionettes; that is, with puppetry while there is still a direct physical relationship with the thing so that a somatic feedback loop is possible. Kaplin suggests the point 'where the center of gravity of the performing object and the performer are distinct from each other, that the term "puppet" can be used', but notes, 'like all the different zones of contact I outline here, the divisions are not sharp' (23). My range of reference includes mask and body mask since masks can be worn elsewhere than on the face and at this point I would argue they become puppets. Indeed, this was my route into puppetry, via masks at Lecoq, which we displaced onto other parts of our bodies. Body masks equally need not correspond to the anatomy of the wearer; I might have a head on my back or might be wearing a body mask with another actor as in the good old pantomime horse.

Bringing awareness to handling things as the baseline activity for puppetry might also be seen as the starting point for other art forms dealing with matter - sculpture, painting, ceramics and so on. Puppetry is a transdisciplinary or pluri-disciplinary (to use Jurkowski's term) art form by its very nature. Other elements to which performer training attunes awareness - rhythm, breath, articulation (movement and voice), space, *le jeu* and so on - are also the business of the puppeteer. But these are addressed, or expressed, through the manner of handling things. The material qualities can be accessed through vision too, it might be argued; what does it look like? Indeed, I have usually been directed in this way for performances involving puppets and objects where an outside eye is invaluable, although sometimes this might only be a mirror¹¹. The puppeteer's point of view and the viewer's are so different

¹¹ Schönbein's use of both mirror and inner sensing is described in Chapter 6.

that it can be hard for the puppeteer alone to know what 'works'. Placing the emphasis on the visual to the exclusion of the felt precludes sensory feedback that is important for the puppeteer in her work, and will also impact on the show if one is being made. Person-image and how it is altered by or extended into objects becomes a focus for attending to sensitivity and qualities of movement in puppetry to compliment or counterpoint a more purely visual aesthetic approach. The same score or scene performed by one puppeteer and another might be very different depending on how the person is attending to herself.

The puppeteer needs (at least) a dual focus; what does it look *and* feel like? An inwards and an outwards focus. On a basic level, this might be about the practical needs of the puppeteer; 'user-friendly' puppets in terms of weight and controls help. The balance and play between inwards and outwards focus, or the relationship between person-image and puppet, is the main work of the puppeteer. By shifting and directing my focus, I shift and guide the viewer's.

Claudé, drawing on his experience of Japanese Bunraku in the 1920s, writes of the puppet as an extrapolation of the mask, calling it a 'centre à gestes', noting that it lives from its centre (Plassard 78). For Claudé, these puppets cannot walk as they have no rapport with the ground; their limbs and heads are only expressive, not functional, and sometimes the puppet seems as though it will escape from its heart-close animators whom he describes as having neither bodies nor faces (79). Human movement is always related to the ground; the human organizes her movement up and away from the ground, whilst also being a body acted on by gravity. The puppet is acted on by gravity, countered by human force. Claudé's comments about the centre of the puppet relate to the desire in FM to free the centre so that the limbs and head are free to move and express. Intriguingly, the centre of the Bunraku puppet is

empty; it has no solid body but only a shoulder board and a bamboo hoop at hip level attached by strings ("Bunraku Dolls..."). Movement is created around a space. The Bunraku form is an example of a performance meshwork; the puppets each have three puppeteers and the music and text are performed to the side of the stage. The elements are co-present and recreated together in the performance. The form requires the audience to shift its focus and create its own integration.

Moving from East to West, Barthes writes on Mr Punch's European relative, Polichinelle; 'it lives not as a total body, totally trembling, but as a rigid part of the actor from whom it is derived ... it is still a piece of movement, a jerk, a shove, the essence of discontinuity, a decomposed projection of the body's gestures ... fallen from the body to become a fetish' (Francis 135; Plassard 87). In terms of person-image, this figure of the puppet is both more connected with the person-image of the puppeteer than the Bunraku, and less involved in a wider meshwork of lines; it is seen as a break rather than a continuity. Barthes calls Bunraku, by contrast, 'the body's tangible abstraction'. By emptying the centre of restrictive matter, expression can flow freely.

Since working with Christopher Leith, I have described my own work as puppetic, inspired by the French term 'marionnettique', although it does not always include puppets and when it does they are always part of a bigger mix. For me, this means I work with and in response to materials and things, listening to the stuff to find out what to do or what to make, assuming that we are collaborating. Just as each individual human moves in an idiosyncratic way, according to her person-image constructed from birth, with her particular structure, growing and moving in the world, each puppet is unique, a new language to be learnt by the puppeteer; it will have its own particular grammar and vocabulary, dictated, as Buschmeyer observes, 'by its centre of gravity and

by the materials of which it is made' (Jurksowski 1988:19). Craig Leo, the original puppeteer of the head of Joey in *War Horse* (2007), voices the Handspring company view of the puppet as a verb¹², not a thing, saying, 'The puppet is our text, it has full-stops, commas,' but these are space, movement and breath rather than words and punctuation (*War Horse Conference*). There might be a base grammar for particular kinds of puppet such as hand puppets - because there are limits to what the hand can do, attached as it is to the body - but each hand puppet will speak its own dialect, just as all violins are not the same to play. Blumenthal puts understanding movement and what is communicated through movement at the centre of the puppeteer's art (71). The same might be said of the FM practitioner. Pfeffer said we were 'movement detectives', tracking down the parasitic in movement (noise) that prevents intention from being translated into action. An interest in movement joins FM and puppetry.

¹² Echoing Buckminster Fuller on the human.

Chapter 3

Schilder's mercurial body-image

Paul Schilder replaced the singular notion of the body, the body as stable unit bound by the surface of its skin, the body as spatially and temporally belonging only to the place-instant of its appearing, with the centrifugal notion of a body-image as unfolding multiplicity spreading in time and space. (Lepecki 129)

3.1 Introduction: tracing a path back to Schilder

The concept of person-image I use in this thesis is broad, related but not identical to Feldenkrais's self-image, which itself cannot be pinned down to a single or clear definition, but is more like an area of intuitions and observations. Beyond everyday understandings, self-image is the process of how I perceive myself as I act, my inner kinaesthetic sense of self and physical integrity, or lack of it. It is related to proprioception but not identical; it covers more conceptual ground. It reaches backwards in time, and constitutes, in the words of FM trainer, Combeau, a 'bag of memory'¹ which produces the present moment in which it is also 'an anticipatory plan for the detailed movements the body must undertake in order to act' (Grosz 1994:69). Feldenkrais came across the concept of body-image in the work of Paul Schilder (1886-1940).

Schilder was a Viennese-born psychoanalyst, student of Freud and best known for his work on body-image, which he writes about most comprehensively in *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, first published in 1935

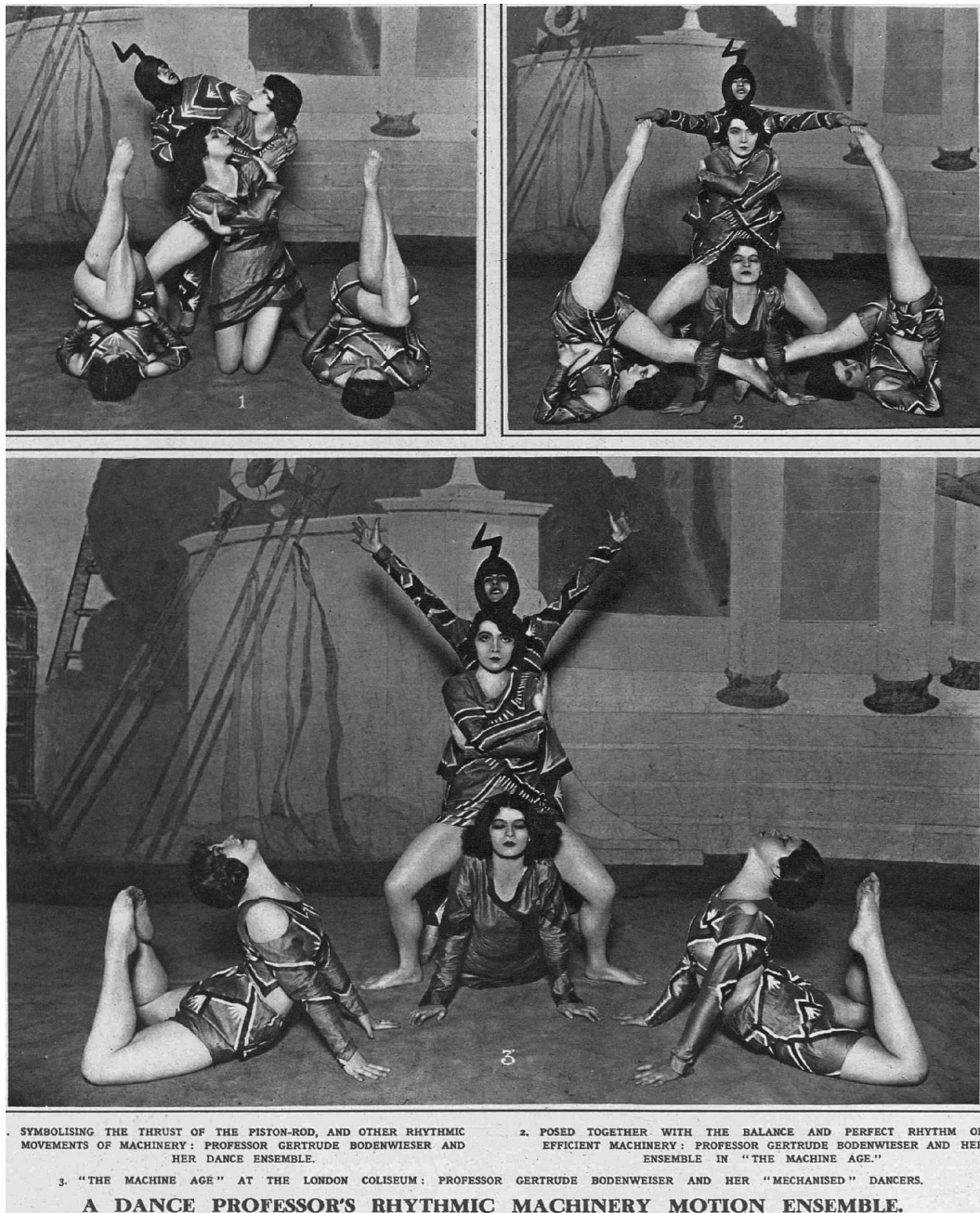
1 'Un sac de mémoire'; reported in conversation with Claire Vialon, FM practitioner. This idea finds an echo in Schilder who writes, 'Memory is ... always in the service of the present' (1942b:383).

by Kegan Paul. The same publisher produced Feldenkrais's *Body and Mature Behaviour* in 1949. Aside from his influence on Feldenkrais, Schilder writes much on the relations between people and things and the interdependence of the animate and inanimate which is of relevance for thinking about puppetry and person-image. I use person-, self- and body-image according to whether I am referring to my point of view, Feldenkrais's or Schilder's, although this is not always clear cut.

Schilder foreshadows writers such as Latour (2004a), on the community of humans and nonhumans, and Bennett (2010), on vibrant materialism, although neither cite him. His ideas complement the notion of meshwork and lend themselves to an Ingoldian-Deleuzian understanding of open-ended emergence and becomings. His work has not been extensively studied for its application in performance theory although Lepecki, quoted above, refers to him in relation to Xavier Le Roy's performance, *Self Unfinished* (1998), which I examine in Chapter 6. It has not been applied to puppetry as far as I am aware.

Schilder was interested in performance; he refers to masked carnival (in Nice) and vaudeville, and it is perhaps of note that he developed his ideas during the 1910s and 1920s in Vienna, when Gertrud Bodenwieser was active in dance, making work such as *Demon Machine*, 1924, in which female dancers embody machine parts (*Demon Machine...*, Sassenberg). Body-image is shown as absorbing or reflecting the changing modern environment (fig. 6, Bodenwieser). There was also a variety of expressionistic influences in Viennese theatre from Wedekind to the Yiddish theatre. In the 1930s Schilder was living in New York when Martha Graham and Doris Humphreys were reconfiguring dance and there was a puppetry renaissance including the Yiddish

Modicut puppet theatre (Portnoy)². While it is outside the scope of this thesis to explore the possibilities of influence further, an awareness of the cultural context helps situate Schilder's far-ranging thought.



² Although Schilder was part of the Viennese Jewish elite who shunned Yiddish and there is no evidence as far as I am aware that he saw productions by any of these artists.

Fig. 6 Newspaper clipping on *The Machine Age*, part of Bodenwieser's *Demon Machine*, from *The Sketch*, 26 June 1929. Image © Illustrated London News Group. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Image reproduced with kind permission of The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).

3.2 Movement, action, function: the enmeshed body-image

Every action is based upon the body-image. (Schilder 1942b:233)

Every single movement has its specific melody. (Schilder 2000:57)

Our relation to the earth, to gravity, is an outstanding factor for the mechanics of movement and for the perception of the body-image.
(174)

Schilder's concept of body-image chimed with Feldenkrais's polyvalent research very clearly. His background in psychology and psychoanalysis contrasts Feldenkrais's in physics, martial arts and education, however the neurophysiological aspect of Schilder's work was a boon to Feldenkrais, offering solid foundations for some of his more intuitive leaps³. In the ATM lesson, AY 24 "The Body-image" (vol. 1a:145-8), Feldenkrais refers to Schilder as the person who introduced the concept of body-image and identifies 'the image that you see, the emotional image, and the image externally developed from the feelings of the body' (147). He continues, 'The more these three (images) are closely related and interwoven the more control a person has of his body, with better accuracy in his movements'. Schilder outlines what he calls the tri-dimensional 'body-image' as involving parts of the body we can see, tactile, thermal and pain impressions, sensations from the muscles and viscera and a

³ Intuitive at the time; many of his intuitions are born out by recent findings around neuroplasticity and learning. For example, Doidge claims that Feldenkrais anticipated the motor theory of thought, proposed by Llinàs who observed that nervous systems are not essential for life but are for complex movement (2015). Doidge acknowledges confirmation of Feldenkrais's thinking in the work of Merzenich who showed 'long-term neuroplastic change occurs most readily when a person or an animal pays close attention while learning' (170).

sense of position, as well as engaging with a 'storeroom of past impressions'⁴ (2000:11). He quotes Head and Holmes, the source of his ideas about postural schema:

By means of perpetual alterations in position we are always building up a postural model of ourselves which constantly changes. Every new posture or movement is recorded on this plastic schema, and the activity of the cortex brings every fresh group of sensations evoked by altered posture into relation with it. (1911:187).

Everything a person does contributes to her body schema as it constantly evolves and influences everything she does.

Schilder characterizes body-image as something humans play with constantly, linking it to imaginative and creative life:

It is one of the inherent characteristics of our psychic life that we continually change our images; we multiply them and make them appear differently. This general rule is true also for the postural model of the body. We let it shrink playfully and come to the idea of Lilliputians, or we transform it into giants. We have, therefore, an almost unlimited number of body-images. (2000:67)

This plasticity interested Feldenkrais as the basis for transformation; playing with body-image is something human beings do anyway, so he was not asking his students to do something completely foreign, merely to bring awareness to a prenoetic process that was already happening in order to steer it more consciously.

Grosz claims Head provided the first 'rigorous notion' of body-image in 1911 in her chapter, "Body-images", in *Volatile Bodies* (1994). Feldenkrais was

⁴ Combeau's 'bag of memories'.

possibly nearer to Head's more strictly neurophysiological approach than to Schilder's more psychological outlook (influenced by Freud), and also to Head's self-experimental methodology, although he may have been bemused by Head severing the radial nerve in his arm to observe the return of sensitivity in it over several years in a series of painful sensation experiments⁵! Head was attempting to cultivate states of reverie and inattention, or a 'negative attitude of attention' as well as make discoveries about the physiology of sensation (Watt-Smith), which resonates with Feldenkrais's use of diffuse attention and concentration and echoes Feldenkrais's own patient research into movement via self-observation. Ironically, Head recognized the need for minimal stimulation to see results in his subjects as he explored tactile and sensory thresholds (1911), a central idea in FM, where the student is asked to reduce effort in order to detect small differences⁶. But while Head remained in the nineteenth century model of scientific introspection and expected objective results from his self-experimentation, Feldenkrais devised an open-ended method which others can follow, each on her own path of discovery, with no fixed outcome in mind. The beginnings of the ideas of both men in self-observation is of interest in and of itself. Close attention to self was required to create Feldenkrais's method, which others can now use; this pushes it outside the realm of allopathic medicine. Schilder came from and stayed within a more conventional medical model, but drew heavily on case studies from patients who were often very articulate about their experience, and sometimes also

5 Feldenkrais does not appear to reference Head directly however, and he is not mentioned in Reese's comprehensive biography.

6 This idea is based on the Weber-Fechner law which relates human sensitivity to relative differences in stimulus. Adding an apple to a bag of shopping might go unnoticed, but placing the same apple in the empty bag will not. The fire of a lit match in broad daylight is barely visible but a single match flame can light up a dark room. In FM 'reduced muscular effort' lowers the 'threshold of sensitivity' (Reese 2015:192).

medical experts themselves, such as a medical student who observed his attacks of dizziness over the course of eighteen months (1942b:92-3).

A note on the distinction between 'postural schema' (Head's term which Schilder uses) and 'body-image' (Schilder's term). Gallagher analyses the difference between body-image and body schema (akin to 'postural schema'):

A body-image consists of a system of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to one's own body. In contrast, a body schema is a system of sensory-motor capacities that function without awareness or the necessity of perceptual monitoring. This conceptual distinction between body-image and body schema is related respectively to the difference between having a perception of (or belief about) something and having a capacity to move (or an ability to do something). (25)

According to Gallagher's definitions, a person's body-image is both productive of, and dependent on, her body schema. Body schema involves what I do and body-image involves what I think I do. Body (postural) schema is learned movement habits and body-image is a shifting process of thought-perception in relation to these habits. These are actually quite limited views of body-image and schema, but help to clarify the foundations upon which Schilder and Feldenkrais build flexible, pliable and open ideas. Body-image and postural schema are not identical in Schilder.

While Schilder looked at body-image from the perspective of psychology and psychiatry, Feldenkrais was interested in general human functioning, both for the fit and healthy (in society's terms, not his) and those with medical conditions or injuries. Schilder links psychiatric cases with changes in postural schema and body-image; Feldenkrais shows how working on the self-image (which he also calls 'body-image' and 'primary image') can work on a problem (which might be motor or psychological), not necessarily curing (and not

looking to cure, which he sees as a regression to a prior and not necessarily good state), but improving function⁷.

Schilder debated whether the postural model was 'built up by sensations and memories' or whether there was 'something beyond the sensations,' asking if a sensation has 'any inner meaning without being brought in connection with the postural model of the body?' (2000:13), meaning a gestalt of being and body-image. He recognizes the discrepancy between what a person does and what she thinks she does; 'many of the tonic changes in the posture of the limbs change the actual body only and not the body-image' (80). He also sees the ongoing plasticity of the body-image (as had Head); 'we never cease gathering experiences and exploring our own body' (172), emphasizing the active and collaborative nature of it:

We acquire it [the postural model of the body] in the directed and intentional action concerning the world ... The postural model of the body has to be built up. It is a creation and a construction and not a gift. It is not a shape ... but the production of a shape. There is no doubt that this process of structuralization is only possible in close contact with experiences concerning the world. (113)

For both Schilder and Feldenkrais, body-image is enworlded, embodied and social, or to use an Ingoldian term, enmeshed; it only makes sense to talk about an intelligent person, not an intelligent body. A person is, by their nature, in and of a broader meshwork.

Besides the importance Feldenkrais gives to self-image, there are many related concepts present in Schilder that are traceable in Feldenkrais's work. Both see perception and action as a functional unity and perception as

⁷ I look at the notion of function in FM below and in the following chapter.

synaesthetic; sensations, posture, emotions, action and personality are one (Schilder 2000:15, 114). This relates to Feldenkrais's summary of human action as always involving four elements; moving, thinking, sensing and feeling. Schilder's emphasis on intentional action is important in relation to the concept of function in FM which focuses on action as the fulfilment of intention, or functional movement, which is movement towards, in relation and response to, and on the world.

Partly due to his personal history, Feldenkrais was concerned with survival and interested in movement likely to support it. However, he was also concerned to move beyond questions of survival and explore human potential to its full. He developed his notion of function in relation to many sources, but it is useful to look to Schilder to clarify Feldenkrais's ideas. Schilder thought that 'function cannot be defined from the point of view of anatomy alone, but only from the point of view of environment and situation in relation to anatomy' (1942b:235-6). FM does not use expressive or non-functional movement as a source for exploration, which is not to say it has nothing to offer what might be seen as the expressive arts. Indeed, if expressive movement, voice or playing (instruments or puppets) can be rooted in functional movement, the connection between intention and expression can be liberated⁸. This is what the dancer in Kleist's essay, "On the Marionette Theatre" (1810)⁹ is referring to when he complains of dancers having their souls in an elbow or the lower back rather than performing movement which follows 'the simple law of gravity'; their movement is affected (2012:123). Schilder expresses a similar idea; 'Every striving and desire changes the

⁸ On functional movement, with particular reference to FM, and choice in the actor's art, see Worsley.

⁹ To which I return in Chapter 5.

substance of the body, its gravity, and its mass' (2000:201). He is interested in the history of figurative painting as a history of how people have seen (and perhaps lived?) the human body (271-272). The history of puppets and puppetry might provide similar insights with the added element of showing something about the understanding of (expressive) movement. Both histories reveal traces of the shifting experience of self-image over time and in different locations¹⁰. I explore this further in Chapter 6.

Schilder relates external space and body-image; that is to say he recognizes the role of the environment in the co-construction of body-image. In observing the anticipatory plan of human action and the active nature of the beginning of the movement he provides Feldenkrais with a key substantiation of his own personal observations; being about to move or imagining movement are active processes and therefore useful for learning. On function, Schilder writes, 'we must give up rigid ideas about anatomy in its relation to function when the general situation changes' (2000:26) suggesting the (not uniquely) Feldenkraisian emphasis on function in which actual anatomy is irrelevant, but how it is used is everything. He notes that making movements helps orientation; movement is a source of knowledge. Doing can be, or can lead to, understanding. Feldenkrais exploits this to the full in his method. Schilder identifies the importance of the mid-line of the body for organizing movement and notes that symmetrical parts of the body are 'physiologically and psychologically connected with each other' (20). The mid-line is a conceptual tool in FM both in terms of perceived symmetry and asymmetry and its use to

¹⁰ *Trinity* (2016), a recent show by Brave New Worlds, explores this in its design-led performance including worn structures. On their tumblr they say they are 'investigating the processes of transformation, iconification and transcendence, by looking at the ways in which the body has been masked, morphed, muted, ritualised, armoured, adorned, transformed, elevated, made "other", through the centuries from medieval and renaissance art, fairy-tales and folklore, to science fiction and fashion. We are playing with the archetypes of the female form, from the fictional to the personal' (*Brave-New-Worlds*).

increase global movement awareness (develop self-image), as are the more neurological aspects flagged up in Schilder where crossing the mid-line with a hand or foot, for example, reveals aspects of the neurophysiological organization of the person in certain cases¹¹. In FM this translates as looking for what works and finding out how to expand it to other areas; observing functionality around the mid-line is one strategy for doing this.

3.3 Schilder and the community of body-images

Schilder considers the importance of the sociology of body-images for ethics and aesthetics as well as its physiological foundation. He makes the case for the need to 'consider the interrelations of the body-images of various persons, or, in other words, the sociology of body-images' writing that:

The body-image in the sphere of perception is dependent on the inanimate world or rather on the world under the aspect of the inanimate. The body-image in the libidinous sphere is to a great extent dependent upon our attitudes towards the love-object, or, in a broader sense, the animate world, or still better, the world under the aspect of animation and life. (2000:175)

He thinks 'that the development of genital sexuality is necessary for a full appreciation of other persons and our appreciation of their somatic integrity' (173), echoing Feldenkrais's concerns in *Body and Mature Behaviour* where the ability to achieve full orgasm is a gauge of maturity. Grosz identifies the problematic nature of seeing a full self-image as dependent on a stable, genital sexuality which does not take into account female sexuality which she calls '*genitally* multilocal, plural, ambiguous, polymorphous' (1994:83). I would

¹¹ See Worth on asymmetry in FM and dance training.

add that it is also reductive of male sexuality to make its unique focus the phallus and limiting in its view of human sexuality which can also include asexuality as a positive choice or state. Schilder refers to male experience as human experience, and Feldenkrais could be accused of the same; both are of their era. However, the practice of FM allows for and listens to difference. The demasculinization of the work is in the hands of current practitioners, many of whom are female (not that this necessarily means better listening to and allowing for female experiences)¹². The emphasis on structure and skeleton in FM might be seen as helping to make a touchstone of masculine experience given that the skeleton is relatively genderless¹³, compared say with the broader ('multilocal, plural, ambiguous, polymorphous') palette in Body Mind Centering, where bones, organs, nervous system, cells and so on are each focused on in turn¹⁴. I don't think however that FM is *necessarily* a practice which makes male experience the norm, but it *could* be. I return to this discussion in the following chapter.

Whilst many of Schilder's terms, such as references to 'primitive man', and opinions, for example, about what he sees as aberrant homosexuality, are

12 Among Feldenkrais's early students and assistants, many were women who have gone on to develop the method, including Mia Segal, Ruthy Alon, Myriam Pfeffer, Chava Shelhav, Bruria Milo, Gaby Yaron and Anat Baniel. In 1982 Feldenkrais chose these women, along with only two men (Jerry Karzen and Yochanon Rywerant) to be trainers in his method ("Jerry Karzen"). He died in 1984, so his teaching was largely in the hands of these women. From my own experience, men are in the minority in FM trainings, but this might only be the case in the UK, France and the US; I have no experience of trainings elsewhere.

13 The main differences are that males tend to have larger bones and females a wider, circular pelvic inlet ("Male or Female?").

14 'Body-Mind Centering®' is an integrated and embodied approach to movement, the body and consciousness. Developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, it is an experiential study based on the embodiment and application of anatomical, physiological, psychophysical and developmental principles, utilizing movement, touch, voice and mind. Its uniqueness lies in the specificity with which each of the body systems can be personally embodied and integrated, the fundamental groundwork of developmental repatterning, and the utilization of a body-based language to describe movement and body-mind relationships' ("Body-Mind Centering®").

of his time and deeply problematic, this should not obscure other useful aspects of his work. (In Feldenkrais's writings too some terminology and postulation is out of date; he also displays at least an ambivalence towards homosexuality, for example.¹⁵) More than just a source and confirmation for Feldenkrais, Schilder explores body-image from aspects that are of interest in a discussion of both puppetry and political ecology. The study of self and body-image is ultimately about societal transformation in the work of both. Giving a palpable sense of ethical responsibility, Schilder asks:

Is there not a stage in which we see body-images everywhere? Is there not a stage where the soul and the body-image are practically all over the world? Is there not an animistic phase in human development? Identification exists between ourselves and our fellow beings ... all these persons outside ourselves are necessary to build up the picture of our own body. When we have built up our own body we spread it again all over the world and melt it into others. It would be wrong to conclude that collective processes go on. There is no collective body-image; but everybody builds his own body-image in contact with others.
(2000:273)

As I hope is coming into view, he can be seen as pointing towards ideas discussed in Chapter 1: Deleuze's haecceities (1980), Ingold's meshworks (2007, 2011), Latour's actor network theory (1990) and community of humans and nonhumans (2004a) and Bennett's vibrant materialism (2010). Schilder identifies the continuum from animate to inanimate whilst also recognizing that humans sense their difference from the world and act in and on it. He writes:

It is fascinating to follow the remote possibilities of identification. They descend from the animal of the mammalian type to everything which is animated, thence to plants, and beyond that to the inanimate world,

¹⁵ Although he also says 'women are far superior to men...as far as pain goes' (*Amherst 1980, 1, 00:03:10*)!

especially in so far as it moves. And the world is primarily a moving world. Rest is only a special type of movement. When we are connected with the world by identification, we derive from it the feeling of unity with the world. But at the same time the world remains different. It is an object towards which we are acting. (2000:253)

Human beings are primarily acting in the world. This means that we are acting in relation to nonhumans, as well as to each other, either taking them towards and even into ourselves or pushing them away or out of ourselves. The escape route from holism and monism is intentional action. But there is also the tendency to calibrate one's body-image with the body-images of those with whom one comes into contact. In Chapter 6 I look at specific examples from performance to consider this mesh of intentionality and action. According to both Schilder and Feldenkrais, people act according to their body-images and this is connected, says Schilder, to 'the deep community between the postural models of (other) human beings' (44). He makes this into an ethics; 'There are deep connections between our actions and interests towards ourselves and our actions and interests towards others. The preservation of the body-image of another person is an ethical value in itself' (282)¹⁶. This relates to Feldenkrais's idea that (detrimentally to the progress of society and the person) social expectations often outweigh organic needs in influencing the way a person acts¹⁷.

Schilder hints at a sense of the potential radical nature of FM when he says, 'what persons around us do with their own bodies is also of enormous importance. Here is the first hint that the body-image is built up by social

16 Schilder takes this idea very far, discussing the physiological basis for animism.

17 I examine the notion of 'organic need' in the following chapter which focuses more directly on Feldenkrais's work with self-image.

contacts. The child takes parts of the bodies of others into its own body-image' (137). Schilder supposes that, 'every action of the ego in the analytic sense, every grasping, groping, and sucking, will again have an enormous influence on the structure of the body-image' (123). In FM practitioner training, self-image is explored by retracing its development from the sucking and bringing of hands and feet to the mouth of earliest infancy to motor coordination for rolling, crawling, walking, hopping and so on; fundamental human movement.

Schilder connects the transformations of others and ourselves; 'the community of body-images is at the basis of every social function' (205). If this is so, working on self-image has great transformative potential at the level of society; what people embody will be passed to their children and entourages. Schilder cites dance and shape-changing performance as examples of ongoing (beyond childhood) human experimentation with body-image. For him, the history of self-image is also the history of humankind; 'The building-up of the body-image is based not only upon the individual history of an individual, but also on his relations to others. The inner history is also the history of our relations to other human beings' (138). Self-image has something to say about puppet-human relations as well as about human-human relations. The 'inner history' also has an outer history in the human production of puppets, puppetry techniques and ways of telling through nonhumans.

3.4 Schilder on 'outside space'

An object always has a definite relation to the body-image. An object is the crossing point of many worlds. It is in the world of physics and in the world of practical and moral values. (Schilder 1942b:233)

On a very basic level, Schilder shows that 'the stabilization of the object parallels the stabilization of the impression of the body,' hence the 'elimination of perceptual motion' is necessary for 'efficient action directed towards the stabilized object' (137). Unless I can stabilize my perceptions I will not be able to stabilize my body-image which I need to do to act in and on the world with intention. I need a world to 'cling to and lean on', in Schilder's words:

Every action is based upon a background of posture, in which the individual is oriented to the outside world... posture is in direct relation to the spatial framework. A posture must necessarily be a reaction to the force of gravitation. Action can only be understood as emerging from the continuous tonic adaptations to one's environment or pulls. (374)

The puppeteer's art is to refine the everyday capacity to act in and on things in the world, choosing specific qualities and rhythms of interaction. For Schilder, 'philosophers and psychologists have not given sufficient attention to the fact that there is not only a space outside of the body but also a space which is filled by the body' (188), and neither have puppeteers. He goes on, 'The image of the body extends in space and implies space perception. Without an outward space, body space is strictly senseless'. He thus claims a co-dependency for outside and inside space; one's body is also part of the outside world. His remarks on the difference between the space of the body and the space outside it are of particular relevance for puppetry:

The aims of a movement can be very varied. The aim can be an aim in the outside world, in the outside space. It can be an aim in the region of one's own body. It can be the reaching of a particular point, or the acting on a particular object. Experience in pathology ... leads me to the conclusion that the psychological space concerning one's own body is different from other space. Space therefore, psychologically shows a lack of homogeneity. The outside space and the body space differ in their structure. (57-8)

The puppeteer has at least three spaces, if not four or five; the space she occupies herself, the space she occupies with the puppet, the space of the spectacle, the space shared with the audience, and beyond this the social space. The puppeteer communicates with the audience through the intermediary of the puppet, at least partially. The spaces occupied by and with the puppet are transitional; they are neither purely beyond her nor her own space. If you touch my puppet, either yourself or through another puppet, you are also touching me. Depending on the style of puppet and on your touch, I may or may not feel the touch as something which impacts on me. It may be that I need to sense it in order to react and create meaning for the audience both when we are moving the same puppet, and when we are not. The space of the puppet is invested with presence and intention and endowed with person-image, although it is absent of bodily human presence. The melody of the puppet is influenced but not governed by its physics, just as my personal movement melody is influenced but not governed by my physical anatomy. Puppetry plays with the 'lack of homogeneity' of space; the difference of structure in inner and outer space. It can conjure inner space where there is none by creating a sense of a living being where there is just inanimate material and it can allow outer space to impact on inner space, the puppet on the puppeteer, as if more than one person with a person-image were present. The work of the puppeteer is to play with 'aiming her movement' in particular ways to encourage this bleeding between outside space and the space of the body.

Schilder makes what might seem like an obvious point:

the human body proves insufficient for many of the tasks which the animate and inanimate surroundings offer. This is partially a problem of strength, but it is also a problem of the space relation between the

individual and the objects. We can reach further with a stick or thrown stone than with our arms and hands. (1942a:45)

Perhaps this idea can be extrapolated to the function of puppets as tools of the human psyche. The human body alone, used in an everyday way, does not reach far enough into the world nor allow a sure enough grasp on reality; puppets extend the power of the human imagination. The body used in extra-daily ways in dance and theatre also extends the human's reach, but the specificity of puppets is that they are also physically present and manipulated as tools, extending both agency and imagination.

Following the case study of a schizophrenic, Schilder states, 'When the dimensions of the outer space are changed, there is also a change in the dimensions of the body-image' (1942b:208). Lecoq used exercises such as 'miming' one's room, the spaces of his school, or an entire city, to increase sensitivity to the effects of outer space on person-image by exaggerating these and expressing them in movement. A cathedral must have a high roof to accommodate a person's sense of soul, which it also helps to create. Implicit in these exercises is a recognition that perception of spaces happens through time; outer spaces have a dynamic and a rhythm which is in dialogue with an individual's person-image. It is perhaps easier to conceive of the impact a space has on me than the impact of a puppet or object. There is a tendency to think of things, and especially tools, as manipulable. Puppetry is sometimes thought of as manipulation, although the term is used more in French and other Latin languages than in English where we usefully avoid it, using 'puppeteering'. Thinking in terms of manipulation reduces the ways in which one might perceive the interactions between puppet and puppeteer. Before doing anything to or with a puppet, how might I mime my response to it, or

mime the thing itself? How does it affect my person-image? How does it change me?

3.4.1 Objects and touch

On the absorption, construction and destruction of objects, Schilder notes that through the earliest developmental acts of grasping and sucking, infants seem to want to absorb or destroy things (1942b:240). It is not only perception and imagination that build up objects and destroy them, but motility; the amount of broken stuff in a house lived in by a free-range baby or toddler testifies to this! Schilder writes:

Motility is not merely directed towards the object, but it is concerned in the creation of the object. The resistance of objects to push and pull makes them objects. Push, pull, and momentum of objects are object qualities closely related to the motility of an individual. Human action progresses by creating more complicated objects, which give opportunity for further development of action. (241)

His emphasis on creation chimes with the notion of becoming, picked up from Deleuze by Ingold, and although he uses the word 'object', his sense is more akin to Ingold's 'things' which are not fixed entities. Schilder's objects are very much becomings or things in a meshwork of actions, intimately related to person-image in development and flux.

In the following passage, Schilder quotes Head and Holmes (1911:188), pointing exactly to my field of reference; when the body schema is extended beyond the person:

It is to the existence of these 'schemata' that we owe the power of projecting our recognition of posture, movement, and locality beyond

the limits of our own bodies to the end of some instrument held in the hand. Without them we could not probe with a stick, nor use a spoon unless our eyes were fixed upon the plate. Anything which participates in the conscious movement of our bodies is added to the model of ourselves and becomes part of these schemata: a woman's power of localization may extend to the feather in her hat. (2000:13)¹⁸

And a puppeteer's may extend to her puppet. But whereas the feather becomes part of the person, the puppet maintains an otherness; it is both me and not me, my body is both present in it and absent, and it also has its own body and way of being - it seems to have a person-image. I can feel through its hand, but I endow it with its own body-image too, seen and felt by both me and by the audience. The puppet has a certain autonomy, of both action and, where applicable, voice; it can say and do things which I do not intentionally control. It has an alternative person-image which acts differently to me. This might be true, to a degree, of the feather in the hat, but is less true of the hammer or blind person's stick, for example. Aside from accidents, rigid tools mostly do what we ask of them, more or less effectively, once we are trained in their use. In this small discrepancy lies much of the power and mystery of the puppet; it is both a tool of the person and of the here and now, and a channel for the not-this-person, the other and elsewhere. It is both a continuity of the person, and a rupture, fracture, or significant blip in reality which allows a fresh perspective or voice to be seen or heard (Barthes, Gross, Kohler).

Schilder cites Köhler saying, 'primitive adornment does not depend upon its possible effect on others but upon a curious heightening of the animal's body feeling, self-consciousness, and pride' (2000:203, n.1). The puppet too functions to heighten the puppeteer's capacity to feel and allows her to feel

¹⁸ Grosz also quotes this passage (1994:66).

through a different body and body-image. Schilder refers to masks and their somatic effect on the wearer:

When people wear enormous masks at the carnival in Nice, they are not merely changing the physiological basis of their body-image but are actually becoming giants themselves. One of the pleasures to be derived from this pageant is the possibility of playing with the enlargement of our body-image and thus increasing our own importance. Our body-image is in a continuous process of enlargement and shrinking and we enjoy these changes in it. The body-image changes continually and we triumph over the limitations of the body by adding masks and clothes to the body-image! (204)

This body-image play is not confined to mask but also explored by artists such as Rebecca Horn in her worn sculptures, and, in different ways, Orlan in her plastic surgeries and Stelarc in his prosthetics and cyborgisation¹⁹. Of these, I see Horn's work as having the most affinity with puppetry and also, in my view, with Lecoq and his colleagues' and students' research in the L.E.M.²⁰ where worn or carried structures are built as expressions of the dynamics of movement. There is an affiliation between the L.E.M. and the research around costume and colour in the Bauhaus, of which it is both derivative and a development. Horn's work is puppetic in that she manipulates structures worn on her body. The work of Orlan and Stelarc might seem more radical, using the artists' own bodies as sites of transformation to ask questions about human form and identity. Head's severing of his own radial nerve might be retrospectively reframed as performance art in this vein. Although he was investigating sensation as a scientist, his process was not dissimilar to

19 See *Rebecca Horn, Orlan and Stelarc*.

20 Laboratoire d'Etude du Mouvement (L.E.M.). The aforementioned show 'Trinity' by Brave New Worlds is clearly of Lecoq/L.E.M. lineage, where worn abstract structures are performed as mask; the performance guided by the dynamic of the structure.

contemporary body-artists. However, it is not necessary to go this far in order to play with and challenge notions of person-image; puppetry can do this in beguiling and disturbing ways. In much of Schönbein's work, that I consider in Chapter 6, it is often hard to tell where the performer ends and the puppet begins; Moussoux-Bonte play with self-similarity and identity in a related but different way ("Twin Houses"). An expertly puppeteered puppet or material comes alive and seems to think and move for itself. Orlan and Stelarc are questioning the human body as a limited or fixed entity by altering their body-images through additions, like masks. They are playing with their person-images and how other people react to their manipulations, but so is the puppeteer; the puppet doesn't have to be sewn into my skin or operated by electrodes planted in my brain. It is already operated by my brain, via my hand or another part of my body.

The puppet can go beyond the mask in that, in certain cases, it not only shifts the body-image such that one can become a giant, or a dragon, or something else, but one can become that thing at a distance from oneself whilst also retaining one's own person-image. Like throwing one's voice, a new person-image is thrown outside the space occupied by one's own body. The puppet sometimes functions like the mask, allowing a transformation of the whole person, and sometimes functions as if there was a separation between the person and an other, which is endowed itself with its own person-image. This opens up the possibility to feel through another and points towards the empathetic qualities the puppet can encourage.

In Chapter 6 I look at examples where mask blurs into puppet, and include a close analysis of one work where the actor and his puppets are very clearly physically separate entities (*Fastoche*, by Pierre Tual) and person-image is the theme. My choice here is governed by an interest specifically in the zone

where the limits of person-image are explored in a fluid exchange between person and thing. Thus my interest lies in a puppetry approach to performance and in the zone between mask and puppetry, neither of which I speak to in their purer forms.

Schilder describes the way in which a person's skin almost reaches towards objects, an observation that is pertinent to puppeteering and helps to develop the idea of different qualities of agency. He writes, 'There are no sharp borderlines between the outside world and the body' (2000:85), in the sense that we feel our boundary through the material that it touches; clothes, shoes, furniture and so on. On the other hand, 'object and body are psychologically separated by a space in between'; I tend not to think of things as part of myself, even when they become integrated in my body-image. Schilder recommends this experiment:

Diminish the pressure of the fingers against the object. We feel the object less and less and the fingers more and more. When the fingers are finally only just touching the object, the object is scarcely perceived any longer, but we have a distinct feeling in the tips of our fingers. We can now observe a paradoxical sensation. It is as if the skin were protruding over the surface and forming a slight cone, which almost reaches for the object! (86)

The sense in which a human being is reaching out involuntarily towards the world in order to touch and know it is an interesting phenomenon for puppeteers. I would argue that puppeteering develops a sensibility which allows me to sense the outside world reaching out to me²¹.

21 In a masterclass with Christopher Leith at Little Angel in 2007, he asked us to look at a selection of wood blocks and try to sense which one drew us towards it, or one to which we were drawn. These were to become heads for simple string puppets. His request was not as simple as choose a piece of wood, or even choose a piece you like.

Touch in FM is usually 'bony'; I am looking for a sense of bony connection between myself and my student. In the practitioner training, I was taught to arrive, to make contact with the person through my hands, to sink through the different layers - skin, fat, muscle - to reach the bone; not literally, but in imagination, or in terms of my focus or intention. Touch can be very light and still reach bone - in fact this is the aim. I want my contact to create a learning environment for the student, or the conditions for learning. Schilder raises the question of how closely human beings can approach each other. Feldenkrais's work shows that there can be a rich intertwining of persons, that is not erotic or sexual, but which can affect both people on a profound level in a deep, kinaesthetic conversation. Although puppets are things, I suggest that one of the reasons they affect people is because they stage something like this level of conversation but between human and other, and they often stage it as a human-human, or human-creature conversation (Jones, Kohler). It is often moving to watch a one-on-one FI lesson, where, in a sense, the student becomes more herself by giving up something of her habit and accepting to be more skeletal, more thing-like. This object-quality seems to bring something human and tender to the relationship. The wonderful French acrobatic duo, Justine et Frédéric, explore this, transitioning between active and passive partnering moments where Justine becomes doll-like, giving herself, her weight, to Frédéric; watching them is like watching extreme FI (Barbier)!

On sensitivity, Schilder comments that, 'Our tendency to live in the world of reality leads us to neglect what is going on in the field of sensations' (2000:87), presumably meaning that, in our eagerness to seize and use things and go places, we neglect to attend to how we touch what enables our motility and sensitivity. Feldenkrais can be said to have made it his work to put

sensation back at the centre of the experience of living. And while both Feldenkrais and Schilder recognize the movement in rest, they also emphasize movement as a mode of discovery. Schilder suggests we do not feel our bodies when at rest:

Movement leads to a better orientation in relation to our own body. We do not know very much about our body unless we move it. Movement is a great uniting factor between the different parts of our body. By movement we come into a definite relation to the outside world and to objects, and only in contact with this outside world are we able to correlate the diverse impressions concerning our own body. (112)

FM asks us to dive into the micro-movement in rest and in preparing for movement. These ideas speak to the puppeteer; by moving in and with it, puppetry becomes an art of knowing the world and oneself. Grosz refers to a 'counter-tradition' of the thing in philosophy 'not as other, but as . . . that which prompts us to act, to invent, to practice, to extend ourselves beyond ourselves' (2002:78). FM and puppetry feed each other to offer a practice that encourages an attentiveness towards the world, towards oneself and one's action in and on it. Using FM to help focus on the points of rest, the puppeteer can tune into the emergent quality of the puppet's movement.

3.4.2 Agency

The following passage from Schilder is key to understanding the relationship between body-image and agency and how playing with self-image, through FM or puppetry, might open up new aspects and understandings of agency:

The body-image can shrink or expand; it can give parts to the outside world and can take other parts into itself. When we take a stick in our hands and touch an object with the end of it, we feel a sensation at the end of the stick. The stick, has, in fact, become a part of the body-image. In order to get the full sensation at the end of the stick, the stick has to be in a more or less rigid connection with the body. It then becomes a part of the bony system of the body, and we may suppose that the rigidity of the bony system is an important part in every body-image. (202)

His emphasis on the skeleton relates directly to Feldenkrais's use of skeletal awareness as key to clarifying self-image²². Self-image then is really not just about one's image of one's own body, but about how one is in the world, how one is enmeshed in the world, and how the world is present in oneself. The bony connection with the tool gives agency; puppets both play with and complicate this. With some puppets there is a clear bony connection; a hand puppet is animated from within by the movement of the hand (which becomes the puppet's body/skeleton), in a rod or hands-on puppet there is a rigid connection with the body which gives agency and sensation through the puppet. With string puppets there is no rigid connection to the actual puppet, only to the cross or control. The puppeteer controls the control, not the puppet. The action at the end of the strings is a dialogue between human input and gravity acting on the object. The puppeteer is playing with rest, what Schilder called (qtd. above), 'a special type of movement'. Schilder points out that, 'The more rigid the connection of the body with the object is, the more easily it becomes part of the body-image ... The body-image incorporates objects or

22 Feldenkrais might be seen as falling into the same trap as Schilder and other predecessors by mistaking man's experience for human experience, helped by the notion of skeletal awareness since skeletons are relatively gender-neutral, the sexes displaying only minor differences. The picture is, however, happily more nuanced. In the following chapter I discuss further the problematic of the role of 'skeletal awareness' in FM and in completing the self-image.

spreads itself into space' (213). However, this rule is troubled by the practice of puppetry.

No hard and fast statement can be made about person-image and the puppet. The more proximal the puppet (worn puppets including hand puppets being the most proximal), the greater the sense of physical agency since these puppets are still very much connected to the puppeteer's person-image. However, it is also possible to create an intentional schism and to be in conflict with the puppet on my hand, so that my hand is not an integrated part of my person-image; I can play with disidentifying myself from it. This rupture, or fragmentation, is perhaps easier to accomplish with a puppet over which I have more direct control than with a string puppet where I cannot control all the movement and must listen to its material and structure. A string puppet is in some ways more itself, and less amenable to comply with my desires, including those to work against it. I am less able to extend my person-image into its extremities hence less able to play with associating or disassociating myself from it. Philippe Genty famously created a puppet number where a string puppet leads an antagonistic life of its own. Genty's Pierrot marionette becomes aware of his puppeteer and one by one severs his strings until he lies heaped on the ground, motionless ("Marionnettes TV"). The existential symbiosis of puppet and puppeteer is laid bare. It is a suicide; the puppet seems to have an independent person-image, yet is nothing without its handler.

3.4.3 Structure

The marionette has a structure to which the puppeteer must listen; if I want to influence it I need to build my desires into its structure. For this I need

to be capable of imagining the person-image the puppet might have if it were alive. In UNIMA's obituary for Albrecht Roser, the puppet construction technique of his master, Bross, is described thus; 'motion is released through the center of gravity of the figures themselves' ("On the Death"). Master puppet builder, Stephen Mottram, analyses the movement he wants in his puppets and builds it into them as far as possible, be it human or animal²³. He also concentrates on shifts of weight in the puppet when puppeteering, so, for example, he brings the head of the puppet over the supporting leg before transferring to the other leg in a walk. In a puppet made for *Wunderkammer* by Tübingen Figurentheater, Raphael Mürle plays with structure in his transforming puppet, allowing movement and form to arise from different kinds of joints and hinge, unconstrained by any idea of an accurate anatomical model²⁴. He creates a puppet whose movement does not only reference human movement but, since the form still bears some resemblance to human biped form, I read the movement in relation to my person-image. In this way his creature becomes a fantastic, contortionist, fabulous surhuman, perhaps a contender for Craig's Über-Marionette (1908). The figure's outlandish movement only retains a reference to the human by being a jointed, upright, moving thing. Where a human contortionist's movement is perhaps unimaginable in my own body, I still just about see a single and ongoing person with a person-image. In Mürle's puppet, there are moments when my perception flips; I can no longer accept the creature as having one ongoing person-image - it transforms into another kind of thing. Back becomes front, up becomes down; it disrupts the space around it by its reorientations in ways

²³ He talks about this in his workshops. See "Stephen Mottram" for examples. Also, Jones of Handspring describes their process of puppet design; I address this further in Chapter 5.

²⁴ A brief glimpse of the puppet can be seen here, "Wunderkammer trailer" 00:1.27).

which Orlan and Stelarc could only dream on.

The more distal the relation to the person, as with string puppets, the less sense of direct agency perhaps, although it might also be said alternatively that it is a different quality of agency. The contact is less direct and the process more like coercing a little animal to come out and play, playing with the movement in rest. Marionettes can produce a more schizophrenic sense of having both one's own person-image and a projected one in the puppet. The question of presence here becomes interesting. In order for the puppet to be present, do I focus on giving a sense of integrity of person-image to the puppet, or can I also be said to be feeling through the puppet, even though there is no rigid, bony connection? This raises the question of touch and agency; with a delicate and flexible connection (strings) there can still be agency, but of a different degree and quality. The delicacy of the connection affords less opportunity for forcing. The string puppet becomes, then, a wonderful tool for exploring qualities of touch and extension of self into the world, and of exploring the emergent movement from rest. This returns to Athena's idea that practising puppetry can change the world.

Collaborating with others to produce one coherent person-image for a puppet also becomes a potentially rich and radical process, involving a close 'listening' both to the material and to the other puppeteers. Leo Craig of Handspring alludes to moments of immanence that occur when puppeteering (*The Great War Horse*); the collective of humans and nonhumans becomes something more than the sum of its parts through play. The puppet is a way of exploring other person-images, in the playful way that Schilder claims is natural throughout life. FI involves a similarly intimate and intense act of communication between nervous systems and materiality.

Schilder writes at length about the way in which objects give meaning to actions and how this relates to body-image. He claims that 'movements which have their goal on our own body are psychologically and therefore also physiologically different from movements that concern objects' and that there is a 'greater biological importance to actions directed towards objects. It is in some ways the more vital function' (2000:59). I understand this to mean that survival requires this outwards focus since it is in the world outside that potential dangers lie, and our sources of nourishment. However, the 'outside world' is not a clear-cut thing when the person-image is a process which can include parts of it. It perhaps makes more sense to go back to the thought of the inseparability of inside and outside, whilst accepting a person also has a person-image giving her a sense of integrity and a sense of that which is her and not her. Leder describes the phenomenon whereby much activity that goes on in people is beneath our level of perception in *The Absent Body* (1990); this would include Schilder's postural schema and aspects of Feldenkrais's self-image. Leder makes no mention of self- or body-image however, nor skeletal awareness or lack of it, focusing instead on the organs and processes like digestion where part of the 'outside' is absorbed, transformed and excreted. Grosz too talks about the outside as skin, and the inside as organs, about processes but not about bone and structure (1994:84).

The puppet puts structure centre-stage and, as can be seen from the examples above, there is a deep connection between structure and its perception and person-image and its perception, both internally and with reference to others. In a sense Feldenkrais asks for attention to structure in motion and he equates this with self-image. In terms of theatre training, perhaps attention to person-image and one's skeleton could be seen as an extra-daily act as in Barba and Savarese's theatre-anthropology; specific

choices made in order to train for activity which is not commonplace (32-5). This begs the question however, at what point does one generation's, or a particular group of people's, extra-daily become another's commonplace? Feldenkrais was certainly interested in the transformation of humans and thereby human society. Shared and individual movement habits shift with time, influenced by clothing, architecture, transport systems, common activities (in our times, sitting at a computer, looking at a smartphone and so on), other people, in short by all environmental and social factors. Bringing awareness of movement into the everyday repertoire (and not just that of the specialist actor, sportsperson, dancer, musician, puppeteer and so on) had, for Feldenkrais, the potential to change the world.

3.4.4 Focus

Schilder comments that 'the postural model of the body is especially developed by contact with the outside world' and that 'those parts of our body which come in a close and varied contact with reality are the most important ones. The foot gives us the most intimate touch with the earth' (2000:64). He does not, therefore, oppose periphery and centre. This helps understand why the hands of the puppeteer need to be rooted or grounded through the feet - an exaggerated focus on the hands will not give the best or most comfortable result. For many puppeteers and musicians, the hands might be seen and sensed as the centre, with the rest of the body as the periphery; the work of the somatically aware puppeteer involves finding support from the ground and the conversation *between* the centre and the periphery, rather than necessarily finding support from the centre for the periphery. In FI, it is possible to work either from the proximal or from the distal; the latter might be preferable if

there is pain in the centre or if the person seems particularly shy or vulnerable about having her centre touched.

Moving the centre of focus or movement is a generative game both in FM and puppetry work. Lecoq worked with the idea of leading from different centres - the nose, knees, chest and so on - particularly in mask work. John Wright takes this into his closely related archetype work. Claire Heggen also plays with this idea, bringing it closer to puppetry by putting masks directly onto the new centre (shoulder, buttocks etc.) (Fredricksson). I have also worked with the idea of having eyes in different places in butoh workshops, which similarly shifts the centre of movement and focus²⁵. My four-year old daughter said this evening, 'Imagine if our bodies were made of eyes. Our skin was eyes. Eyes in our bones'; the desire to play with different ways of being is strong! Baker works on the placing of attention to shift the audience's focus, so they see the puppeteer, the puppet, both or neither ("The Puppet", "Who do you see?"). This is different to shifting my movement centre or leading with a different part of myself; I can include the puppet in my person-image or not, and choose to place my focus in it or a part of it, i.e. outside myself. The work in FM, in both FI and ATM, brings into focus all the different parts of the person systematically and refines their integration with the whole; as such it extends the possibility (useful for the puppeteer) that any part, or extension of it in the world, can be the centre of focus whilst remaining deeply anchored into the whole person (in the broadest sense of the term).

²⁵ With Akiko Motofuji, Hijikata's widow, in Tokyo, 1999-2000.

3.4.5 Gravity

Schilder finds that:

Tone has something to do with the outer world and the adaptation to qualities in which physics is interested. The 'tonic' individual considers the world chiefly from the point of view of physics, inertia, mass, gravitation, and also from the point of view of preparedness of the organism. In order to do something, one must first adapt to the general situation of mass attraction. (1942b:236)

However, for more complex action involving things in the world, tonic adaptation is not sufficient. For this, body-image is needed *as well*, although the background is governed by the same physical laws.

Schilder succinctly foreshadows Sheets-Johnstone (2007, 2009, 2011) and Noë (2004)²⁶ regarding respectively the primacy of movement and action as perception; 'Every sensation has its motility ... Sensation has in itself a motor answer. Continued activity is therefore at the basis of our bodily self. We choose and reject by action' (2000:105). In the later, posthumously published, *Mind: perception and thought in their constructive aspects* (1942b), he makes the point even more clearly; 'even for the experience of one's own body, motility is ultimately indispensable,' claiming, from observation, that there is 'an urge to move' (74). This later work was particularly important for Feldenkrais for its observations on the vestibular apparatus; he cites it in the AY lesson-cum-lecture on the body-image cited above (AY 24, vol. 1a:145-8). Schilder posits the intimate co-dependence of the inside of the body and what is outside, linked by intention and action. The fluidity of his conception of body-image is anti-objectivist and materialist in the same sense that Feldenkrais's

²⁶ Neither of whom appear to cite him.

idea of self-image is; materiality is the foundation for action.

The materiality which provides this foundation is gravity-bound. Schilder makes several points on gravity and objects that are pertinent both to FM and puppetry and serve to highlight why the two practices have an affinity with each other:

Our will seems to be in some way directed towards the centre of gravity of a limb. The will is not directed to the moving of the muscle, and the actual location of the tendon and of the muscle tissue has nothing to do with our intention concerning the place at which we want to move the limb. (2000:90)

This connects directly to Feldenkrais's emphasis on the skeleton and awareness of it as the key to performing ballistically²⁷ pure movement. It also connects to the art of puppetry where the sense of weight, particularly in string and other puppets whose material and construction enable them to hang to some degree (such as some rod, table-top, hands-on, and multiple-operator puppets), guides the movement. Schilder notes that when holding an object it feels heavier towards the bottom, even if we know it is an homogeneous object (91). He is describing the feeling of gravity acting on things, which produces pendular motion in objects, puppets and ourselves. Sensing the pendular activity and what it offers without wilful intervention is central to string puppeteering and taught by puppet masters, Stephen Mottram, Christopher

²⁷ My use of the term 'ballistic' applied to movement derives from FM trainer, Jeff Haller. He uses it according to its less common meaning which I quote here from OED: 'Of motion, a trajectory, etc.: able to be described in terms of the laws of ballistics, involving gravity, inertia, and the resistance of a medium. Of a projectile, device, etc.: displaying such motion. Also (in wider sense): designating motion or change, or its course, etc., initiated by a brief input of energy and continuing as a result of momentum' ("ballistic."). Thus Haller is indicating situations where energy input is translated directly and purely into movement which is always produced in relation to the surface I am on.

Leith (now deceased) and Frank Soehnle of Tübingen Figurentheater. (This also relates to sensing the movement present in the resting state.) The string puppet is a series of pendulums which the puppeteer senses and follows whilst gently finding out how the physics of the thing can be guided to serve the dramaturgy of the piece. But Tommy Luther, a puppeteer from Handspring's *War Horse*, also encourages future horse puppeteers to reduce effort and tension by following 'gravity and the weight of the puppet, its natural swing and gait' and warns about getting used to the timing of the pendulum in relation to the leg controls (Kohler 145).

Although human beings are top heavy, this is not borne out experientially, in a similar way to the sense of the object. Schilder identifies the different masses one is able to sense in oneself; the feet, the abdomen and the head. He also calls these centres of gravity (2000:91). In spite of these volumes, as Stephen Levin's biotensegrity model substantiates, the feeling of oneself in space is not necessarily governed by the real weights involved (2016). The biotensegrity model ousts the biomechanical model that can be traced back to Aristotle. The skeleton is not seen as a stacking system with limbs which function as levers and pendulums: 'Biologic structures exist independent of gravity. They are omni-directional structures that can exist and adapt to water, land, air and space' (Levin). Biotensegrity was inspired by Buckminster Fuller's tensegrity (tension-integrity) model for physical structures in architecture, although Levin cites the sculptor, Kenneth Snelson, as his main inspiration. Snelson emphasizes the fact that the rigid components do not touch each other and float in an elastic tension matrix. Applied in Levin's biotensegrity model, this means that the bones do not touch each other and float in a tension matrix of ligaments, tendons and fascia. Pressure on any solid part of a tensegrity structure affects the whole. Biotensegrity speaks to

Feldenkrais's ideal of equally distributed tonus throughout the system according to the movement taking place; a different tonus is suited to standing and lifting, walking and running.

Feldenkrais uses the idea of transmission of forces through bones but I do not think there is fundamentally a contradiction between biotensegrity and his understanding of dynamic anatomy. Forces clearly do travel through bones since they travel through the system as a whole. Touching a person in one place affects the whole. FM is precisely concerned with moving in such a way that weight travels through the skeleton as directly as possible without sheering forces such that a sense of weightlessness is experienced. However, the sense of weight is interesting from a movement point of view; how much weight do you feel in your feet? On which part of your feet (toes, heels, insides, outsides)? How can you use the weight of your pelvis or head to power or guide a movement? These questions transfer to puppetry where the puppet can be a projection of an independent person-image into a space outside one's own body, or like a limb or peripheral part of the puppeteer.

3.4.6 Expanding body-image

Of the hands, Schilder writes that they 'are an outside world for the parts of the body which they touch' (2000:125), suggesting that the separation of self and world is not clear-cut, and not necessarily at the boundary of my body. Puppeteers know this; the other is both within and without, whilst also having a more or less separate bodily form. The hand puppet perhaps most clearly demonstrates this, but even in a string puppet, through which it is difficult to have precise and directed agency in the world, I can project a person-image into the puppet and, in some way, I end where the puppet ends

whilst puppeteering. Hands are very much of the body and need a body in order to be hands; my two year old showed she understood this when, on seeing some puppet hands I had made which were drying, she said, 'They are like hands but not hands. Thank you for showing me that, Mummy'. I understood her to mean they are not hands because they are not attached to a body.

Salvage's study on the puppet as 'spatial structurant' in the context of psychomotor reeducation outlines six levels of spatial engagement mirroring Schilder (albeit with less finesse); the body limited by the skin, gestures, the visual sphere, society, meeting with others and co-existing with anonymous others. Salvage, hinting at a kind of awareness through puppetry, considers the influence of the puppet on the puppeteer's tonus important in relation to how that person organizes herself in relation to the world (50).

Schilder writes about how one's own body can become tool-like; 'generally the trunk and head are less like tools than are the extremities, especially the hands...parts of the body with a motility which is particularly flexible are nearer to the connotation of a tool' (1942a:45). While this might be true for everyday behaviour, all parts of oneself can be used in more tool-like ways – teeth can cut a thread, a puppet can be held in the mouth, a mask worn on the back or backside. Schilder makes clear that 'behind every tool there is the same constructive effort which we found in the building up of the body-image and any other perception' (46), which contributes to an argument for the meshwork. Tools are lines out of and into person-image allowing action to flow out. They help make apparent the porous boundary between us and not-us.

Schilder considers this 'spreading of the body-image into the world':

What has once been part of the body does not lose this quality completely. The bowel movement also separates the faeces only physically from the body, psychologically they remain a part of ourselves... More complicated is the problem of voice and language. The sound produced by me is not completely independent of me. (...) Fingernails, everything which comes out of the mouth and nose, hair which has been cut off, always remain in some psychological relation to the body. The organization of the body-image is a very flexible one. (2000:188)

If the boundaries are porous and moving, is Feldenkrais right in looking for the integrity of the person? Perhaps in the sense that messing with the boundaries is potent when it is a choice, but destructive when it is not, as in the cases of psychosis and mimesis to which Grosz and Schilder refer. Becoming like or undifferentiated from one's surroundings is not always useful for everyday living. This is the logical conclusion of simple holistic and monist viewpoints and it is the reason Grosz rejects them. Flexibility of the person-image means there can be movement between integration and differentiation from one's 'outside'. This is key for the puppeteer for whom the art of becoming invisible is as important as that of having presence, or being able to project it into a more or less distal thing or part of herself.

In a note to the section regarding the flexible body-image, Schilder adds, 'Magic practices with faeces, urine, blood, nails, etc., are based on the fact that they still belong to the body-image' (2000:213, n.1), a point Grosz picks up and identifies as corresponding to Lacan's *objet a* and Kristeva's notion of the abject (1994:81). As well as interrogating the notion of the body's boundary, Schilder approaches territory concerning puppetry in its history and connection with magic and voodoo practices. A puppet might be endowed with magical properties because it includes the teeth, hair, or even

the whole corpse of a person²⁸ (Darkowska-Nidzgorska 184), but also when it embodies or provides the physical manifestation of someone's thought. This is no less a case of 'spreading of the body-image into the world', since the body-image is also the product of a person's imagination. But Schilder notes:

parts of our body can become loose in their connection with the body. Single parts of the body are personified. Children and nurses of children personify fingers. It seems that all protruding parts can gain this relative independence in the postural model of the body. (2000:188-9)

This relates to puppetry where a part of myself is treated as other and endowed with a separate person-image of its own. Schilder identifies the way children treat parts of their own body as strange objects before incorporating them into their body-image (194-5). This process of gradual differentiation between self and world is one which the art of puppetry returns to, again rendering strange one's own body parts and incorporating parts of the world as if they were part of oneself.

The FM practitioner training revisits infancy, exploring the movements of legs, arms and trunk afresh and reintegrating them to the whole. If FM is an integrative practice, puppetry is perhaps more often a process of fragmentation and dissociation. The question then becomes, how can FM be relevant to puppetry? Maybe through the process of differentiation that leads to reintegration; this is explored in later chapters.

3.5.1 Body-image since Schilder

As introduced in Chapter 1, much of the recent literature on body-image

²⁸ Practices found in a belt across central Africa; Cameroun, Gabon, Congo and Ethiopia.

and schema is covered and discussed in Preester and Knockaert (2005) who acknowledge both have 'no fixed status, but are conceptualized in different ways and give rise to a multiplicity of possible applications' (3). Mishara usefully summarizes:

The human self *is* not its representations, but a process. In existentialist terms ... the human self is a dialectical process condemned to self-transcendence, i.e., condemned to prospectively transcend each of its current representations of itself as possessing a body-image. Being (rather than having) a self is the ongoing vulnerability of being oriented towards what is not yet. (145)

Sheets-Johnstone proposes 'corporeal-kinetic patterning' and 'corporeal-kinetic intentionality' to replace the static thingness of 'body schema' and 'body-image' (2005:225). I prefer to use the simpler, more accessible term, 'person image', as it retains the possibility of fixity, giving a place to work from; what in French might be termed 'un point d'appui'.

Gallagher shows how embodiment characterizes human experience from the prenoetic to the emergence of language, the noetic and intersubjective relations. He literally shows how the body shapes the mind, drawing on cognitive neuroscience, case studies and philosophy from phenomenology (primarily Husserl and Merleau-Ponty) to more recent writings on the philosophy of mind and perception (Searle and Dennett). In his distinction between body-image and schema, what is important for my argument is that body-image is perceived as separate from the environment, and body schema more integrated, 'to the extent that it frequently incorporates into itself pieces of the environment that would not be considered part of one's body-image' (39). FM might be described, using Gallagher's terms, as the bringing to light of elements of the body schema which will result in the transformation of both

schema and image. Body schema is always in flux which can be used in a process towards greater awareness in action, or, as is more common and often seen as inevitable, a process of losing awareness and movement possibilities as one ages. Body-image has more of a tendency to get fixed, although it can change. The body of body-image is more like a separate entity while the body of body schema is more like an integral part of the environment, of the cybernetic field, or of the meshwork.

Gallagher marshals philosophical and scientific evidence and arguments that complement Feldenkrais' work and provide a more up-to-date vindication of its principles, and of Schilder's ideas. He understands that awareness functions at the level of intentional project rather than bodily action, but performance can be improved in relation to intention through focus on body schema, freeing up attention. The expansion of movement possibility (within structural limits) expands perception of the world.

Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'schéma corporel' in *Phénoménologie de la Perception* (1945) is described in *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty* as, 'not an image of the body, and so not an object of our awareness, but rather the bodily skills and capacities that shape our awareness of objects' (Carman 69-70). Merleau-Ponty references Head, Schilder and Lhermitte, thus his analysis is firmly rooted in early neurobiology and outside pure philosophy. Gatens summarizes that Merleau-Ponty, along with Lacan and Schilder, consider 'a body is not properly a human, that is, a human subject or individual, unless it has an image of itself as a discrete entity, or as a *gestalt*' (229). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to pursue Merleau-Ponty's argument in greater depth, or relate it to Feldenkrais's work, aside from noting that both find their conceptual roots in Head and Schilder.

Neurophysiologist, Alain Berthoz, highlights that body schema is not conceived as a representation of the body (in the brain), but rather as a scheme of possible actions (247). Elements of body schema can cross over into body-image – one can become aware of one's habits – and thus the scheme of possible actions can change. Echoing Schilder, Berthoz refers to the ability to integrate tools or objects into the body schema, also pointing out that the ability to 'feel' at the object's extremity, rather than at the interface with the object, relies on the object's rigidity, that is to say, on its bony connection to the person (109). It is for this reason that pushing through the bones in FM enables the practitioner to engage with the student's CNS, because passing forces through my skeleton is the only way I can create movement. The skeletal awareness which arises brings a sense of the skeleton as an object through its connection with the objective world and this can help improve the range of body schematic possibilities.

Body-image, then, is neither conscious nor unconscious, but prenoetic (Gallagher 33) or preconscious, that is to say, 'capable of being made conscious' (Grosz 1994:69). This characteristic is vitally important in FM. Self-image is a slippery eel of a thing since it is enmeshed in the being of an individual but it is not a mental picture or image, in spite of the terms used to describe it. It produces the way my body acts but by changing what I do, I can change my self-image. As a concept it teeters dangerously close to implying a separation between body and mind and one of my aims is to clarify person-image as part of a conceptual framework where these are a functional unity.

Thinking of person-image in terms of the meshwork can teeter the other way. The interweaving of elements is so deep and complex that the whole of reality might be thought of as one substance; this is Spinoza's monism, a kind of unsophisticated proto-approximation of the meshwork. In Grosz's search for

ways to reconfigure notions of the body to serve feminism, she finds monism problematic, criticizing it and related contemporary holistic thinking where everything is part of one ecosystem; a totality comprising systems and subsystems. Her reservation is that this does not admit the possibility of the unknown, nor of 'fragmentations, fracturings, dislocations that orient bodies and body parts toward other bodies and body parts' (1994:13). For her, 'There is no body as such: there are only *bodies*' (19) (her italics). By looking at the concept of body-image in Schilder, and with the added practical approach of FM, explored in Chapter 4, it becomes the clear locus of fragment, fracture and dislocation, a place where observation of the gap between a comforting idea of totality and oneness and the individual person who is continually swinging in and out of step with that mythic reality becomes evident. This place can become a place of power and intervention through the practice of FM, and these emergent aspects *rely on* the elusiveness of each person's image of herself.

Person-image has the capacity to warp reality and make certain actions possible and others impossible at any given time. I am unqualified to speak about nonhuman experience and action, but perhaps Caillois' analysis, scrutinized by Grosz, can offer some help here and shed some more light on 'imaging' in relation to action. She cites Caillois' work on the similarity between insects' mimicry (of other insects or of their environment) to what happens in certain forms of psychosis. Mimicry, Caillois argues, is not to ensure survival since predators do not rely primarily on vision, but is rather the result of 'the *representation* of and captivation by space' (Grosz 1994:46). Thus, through what Caillois calls 'depersonalization by assimilation to space' the psychotic and the insect lack the basis for a coherent identity with a personal perspective 'abandoning themselves to being spatially located by/as others' (47). Grosz

quotes Caillois with his own emphasis, '*I know where I am, but I do not feel as though I'm at the spot where I find myself*,' describing the experience of the psychosis called 'legendary psychasthenia'. In Chapter 6 I consider an example of how this kind of explosion of person-image is explored in the puppet performance *Fastoche*, by Pierre Tual.

Noë argues that perception 'is something we do'. In *Action in Perception* (2006) he reorients the philosophy of perception by arguing that vision functions like touch in that we must pass our eyes over things in the outside world in order to gain an understanding of them. I mention Noë's work for his analysis of perception as active, hence movement-based; 'For mere sensory stimulation to constitute perceptual experience – that is for it to have genuine world-presenting content – the perceiver must possess and make use of *sensorimotor knowledge*' (10) (his italics). I contend that this constitutes person-image.

Noë critiques discourses from the philosophy of perception which has tended to treat vision as static and simultaneous, and perception as a brain phenomenon; he says perception is 'not a process in the brain, but a kind of skilful activity on the part of the animal as a whole' (2). He argues that the visual field 'is made available by *looking around*' (57) and that, 'Vision is active; it is an active exploration of the world ... seeing is much more like touching than it is like depicting' (72) (echoing Merleau-Ponty in *Le Visible et l'Invisible* (1968), where he remarks that vision is touching through the eyes, with 'le regard'). Noë points out that the eyes work in saccades and can only see one point at a time; vision is composed of information from a series of points with the eye moving from one to another and inferring the rest of the

visual field²⁹. Vision might then be termed an analytical sense since it needs to gather information from lots of different moments of focus in order to create meaning. Interestingly, Feldenkrais created many lessons around making the movement of the eyes smoother, which contributes to a fuller self-image, perhaps because it makes vision less analytical and fragmented. Fluid movement, including of the eyes, is the sign of action fulfilling intention. This might also be linked to the concept of presence in performance.

Noë's work chimes with Gallagher's and Leder's, who also argue for the intermodality of the senses (2006, 1990). Leder writes, 'Our consciousness frequently does not extend to what is going on in our bodies; our consciousness is enacted by what we do with our bodies' (31). This implies that we move to have a brain, rather than that we have a brain to move. However, Leder clings to vision as the primary sense. Puppeteering involves the senses of touch and vision, but perhaps even more, the proprioceptive system which involves the whole body; the sensors in the muscles and the joints of the skeleton provide simultaneous feedback to my CNS. The proprioceptive system is not reliant on shifting focus in saccades in the way the eyes partially are³⁰; it is not a time-based cumulative sense in the way vision is. Therefore the proprioceptive system, closely related to person-image, is an appropriate basis for a phenomenological investigation since it gives us a body, both as an object in space, and as the site of becoming.

29 It is not possible, by definition, to *focus* on one's peripheral field, but it is possible to detect movement and pay close attention to it. Peripheral vision has been necessary for human survival, sometimes still is, and is a skill that is trained in theatre, where 'seeing' what is happening on other parts of the stage without looking at them is important.

30 There is much to be said from a FM perspective about the role of the eyes beyond vision, for example for organizing movement and in residual tonicity in the resting body, however this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The capacity to have a perspective, to create space (one's personal space) as well as exist in it or as part of it, are the result of lived experience; the result of having a person-image. The self-image can be more or less 'complete' or detailed, in the Feldenkraisian sense, but its lack, loss or severe impairment is the sign of serious illness, as in psychosis. Its 'improvement' however results in a greater capacity to create and develop one's specific perspective in and on the world. A greater capacity to differentiate and be more oneself in whatever sphere one chooses. 'Improvement' here simply means including more parts of oneself in one's self-image as one acts³¹. Feldenkrais supposed that those who deny their own organic needs become more homogenized in society, partaking of a self-image imposed by their understanding of society's demands and thereby limited in their ability to create their own unique space.

Each person's differentiation in the meshwork is bigger or smaller; some are very differentiated on a global scale (world leaders, renowned terrorists, well-known artists); most are very differentiated in their close spheres (the mother for the child, the sister for the brother and so on). The actions of the person differentiate him/her to a greater or lesser degree, depending on what 'stage' the action is taken (the world stage, a regional stage, the domestic stage, a theatre stage...). The loss of social connections, or falling into the dense background of meshworked lines, can easily lead to a loss of the sense of personhood. Homelessness and refugee status are perhaps two of the most common contemporary circumstances which provide examples of this. And they are examples which demonstrate that the person does not stop at the limits of her body. Even dead bodies are still enmeshed in the social

³¹ I examine the concept of improvement in Feldenkrais's work further in the following chapter.

connections of the person who lies dead. Perhaps with this concept of person in mind the choice of person-image over self-image as a term begins to make more sense, suggesting the inherent connection to others rather than emphasizing, as 'self' might, the separation. 'Person' seems to point outwards more than 'self' which points inwards.

3.5.2 Towards somatic ethics³²

Grosz's project in *Volatile Bodies* is to wrest elements that might be of use to feminist reconceptions of bodies from thinkers on body-image. Her focus is on questioning binarized modes of thinking to allow for a multiplicity of bodies and interactions. She uses both body-image and body schema as terms without distinguishing between them; I find Gallagher's distinction useful since he aligns awareness with image and not with schema. Grosz introduces body-image as 'a third term intervening between and requiring the operations of both mind and body' (1994:62). I hope it has become clearer through this chapter that more than a third term, the concept of body-image actually requires mind and body to be seen as a functional unity, and one that is also inseparable from environment and society.

Grosz gives a brief historical account of possible precursors to the modern concept of body-image, including Aristotle's *pneuma*, which she also identifies as foundational for the Christian notion of the soul. Ambroise Paré (c.1510-1590) first described the phenomenon of phantom limb, working with war-wounded amputees. His experience gave him a sense that a person's perception of himself was not wholly governed by what was actually present.

³² The work of Richard Shusterman on 'somaesthetics' is a glaring omission here (Shusterman 2003, 2006, 2007, 2012). Since my focus is on Schilder and Feldenkrais, I consider that there is not the scope within this thesis to consider his very interesting ideas.

Feldenkrais takes this a step further, into the realm of movement; a person does not necessarily move in the way they think they do, or do what they think they do. Through sensory-motor input it is possible to shift patterns in action and, thereby, self-image. Paré compared the phantom limb effect to 'being pulled by the shirt, where the body is being acted upon, and acts, with reference to an absent or intangible force' (Grosz 1994:63). Responding to the puppet as an outside force might begin as a game but quickly there is a sense that it really is an external force acting on me, the puppeteer. Paré used ligature to separate conjoined twins. A worn puppet is somewhat like a conjoined twin; an independent agent which is also reliant on me, into which my person-image extends but over which I do not have complete control.

Noting Schilder's idea that body schema does not correspond with anatomy and that objects, even very large ones, can be incorporated into the schema, Grosz writes 'the rigidity of the bone system is an important part in every body-image' (80) and this points to an intermediate category of objects between inanimate and bodily. For my project this is clearly of interest; puppets are of this category to a greater or lesser degree. They are capable of shifting between inanimate and bodily, and of retaining traces of the body even when they are not animated.

Echoing both Schilder and Feldenkrais, Grosz summarizes that voluntary action requires a body-image for intention to be translated into the beginning of movement, 'the point of transition in activating bones and muscles' (83). While the rigid connection between skeleton and object might be seen as the source of human agency normally, from a puppetry point of view, although direct agency on the material world might be wanting in puppets which lack this rigid connection (strings, shadows, virtual forms), the act of throwing a separate person-image into something outside oneself, or endowing something

with its own self-image can be seen as activating a kind of semiotic agency of a different order. The power to affect, the power to move, albeit not physically. Puppetry forms which are more reliant on the aleatory emergent qualities of materials than on direct forms of manipulation also throw light on the nature of agency and how a softer connection, for example through a puppet's strings, also enables agency, but of a kind that has to allow for greater feedback from the thing.

Lacan's 'imaginary anatomy' is a development of the ideas of body-image and schema from Schilder and other precursors in the field such as Head (Grosz 1994:39-44). On reaching Lacan's mirror phase the child shifts from a serial notion of body parts to a totalized image of self, whilst simultaneously experiencing a fragmented self, and continuing to do so. This relationship between whole and part is thoroughly explored in the FM. Although related to my subject, I will not delve further into Lacan's 'imaginary anatomy' in this thesis since he asks his concept to do a lot more work regarding the problematics of psyche than Feldenkrais's Schilder-derived self-image. Feldenkrais was interested in the fact that motor sensory stimulation *alone* in his view could help a person change her self-image. Hence his rejection of, despite his interest in, Freud. For this reason, retaining a materially grounded view of self-image is important for my argument. As I point out elsewhere, Feldenkrais talked less about self-image and more about skeletal awareness in his later years, perhaps trying to get to what he saw as the core of the issue; literally the skeleton, the bones, the structure, avoiding the complex, boundary-shifting flesh and intangible psyche.

Nietzsche's subject as multiplicity and active 'I' is included in Grosz's study and offers a richer view of human action within an open multiplicity than the cybernetic theory that interested Feldenkrais. The idea of self-image can be

seen to pertain to the multiple subject, and the active 'I' to Feldenkrais's 'potent self'. Expanding awareness and self-image becomes then an ethical and existential pathway, and puppetry a way of giving form and voice to some of the multiples, which amounts also to listening to the 'voices' of nonhumans (Latour's term). Grosz's arguments for the body as thing and nonthing and for the gradation of animateness help avoid the traps of monism and holism, and offer a conceptual model whereby the self-image and awareness are offered as fragment and phase within a multiplicity of other experience, but nevertheless vital to a lived ethics. It is in this bigger framework that I situate my work, using FM and puppetry as connected practices to explore such an ethics.

3.5.3 Towards somatic ecology

In *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (2006), Lepecki addresses Schider via choreographer, Le Roy, whose notion of the body is extremely osmotic and, importantly, includes discourses in that which can be incorporated and expelled. Le Roy identifies the body-image as being 'as much a function of the subject's psychology and socio-historical context as of anatomy,' saying 'there are all kinds of non-human influences woven into us' (Lepecki 43). This leads him to ask whether another alternative to the body-image than the anatomical one exists. I don't understand him to mean there is a need to jettison what he calls the anatomical body-image completely, which might be seen as what Schider and Feldenkrais begin (but do not end) with. Rather that the very ideas that Schider calls up ultimately suggest a multiplicity of possible body-images which would indeed render the individual 'a notion completely devoid of sense' (43).

Le Roy aligns 'body-image' with Deleuze's notions of becoming and 'open subjectivity', and with Artaud's 'body without organs' (taken up by Deleuze and Guattari). Lepecki writes of Schiller's concept:

one's body-image extends itself to any place any particle of one's body has reached across space and across time. Wherever one has left a particle of one's body (feces, blood, menstruation, urine, sweat, tears, semen) there one finds the limits of one's body-image. Wherever one has left an imprint of one's body (including linguistic ones, affective ones, sensorial ones) there is a limit of one's body-image. (50)

He depicts body-image as:

rhizomatic, schizoid, in the sense that it posits a body that is always beyond its proper boundaries, beyond traditional metaphysical notions of presence: a body that is always late to its arrival and always ahead of its departure, a body that is never quite there in the context of its appearing. (50-51)

In light of the discussion in this chapter, Lepecki's summary might be seen as pointing towards somatically sensitive puppetry as an activity which acknowledges and plays with the expansiveness of person-image.

Lepecki takes the idea into the heart of performance theory. The power of the human body in performance is related to its state of constant becoming. The constant becoming is the fertile ground on which FM is seeded; through observation of this becoming, a dual awareness, both focused in and diffused out, can emerge. The puppet, that which I am in relation with, both becomes me and remains recalcitrantly itself (Schumann 49)³³. I also become, or come into the puppet, and my thumb prints, or sweat, or whatever, add to its patina; it cannot completely refuse me. There is an ecology or meshwork of multi-

³³ Latour constructs a more complex narrative around the recalcitrance of nonhumans and their role in his 'collective' (2004a:77-82).

directional relations. In Chapter 6 I further investigate how Le Roy draws on Schilder in his performance, *Self Unfinished*.

Understanding person-image as that which gives coherence to lived experience, but also as being infinitely malleable, serves an analysis of how puppets can extend and explore the multiplicity of possible person-images. There is the potential to switch and merge figure and ground.

Chapter 4

Feldenkrais Method and self-image:

'something invisible, visible'

There is an utter transparency and simplicity to Moshe's work that makes visible - what - the skeleton? the person? I am at a loss to say what. But under his directed non-doing, minimal efforts, divine physics of least action, the person is made visible - in an act of re-creation? The person lies there, relaxed and happy, his or her vital functional pathways laid utterly bare, obvious, empowered - he renders something invisible, visible.

(Reese 2001:20)

Wherever you are, there is somewhere further you can go.

(Ingold 2007:170)

4.1 Introduction

'We act in accordance with our self-image' is the first sentence of *Awareness Through Movement*, the book Feldenkrais most aimed at the general public (1990:3). Although the method remained (and remains), by its nature, experimental, Feldenkrais had by this point developed and grounded it in long theoretical and practical research. Here he most clearly sets out what he means by self-image, asking how much of ourselves is included in our image of ourselves as we act¹. His first reference to it is in *Body & Mature Behaviour*, where he writes 'The image of our body and its relation to space is an essential element in every sensation' (Reese 2015:293), clearly linking

¹ He means in daily life, but this can include 'acting' as performance.

inner space, sensation and movement with environment. Reese describes Feldenkrais's touch as giving him 'a vividly clear, inner vision of myself' (2001:21), giving a sense of self-image as a felt, experienced process which is, however, tricky to pin down. It is part of the 'elusive obvious'; the title of one of Feldenkrais's later books (1981). Self-image is more like a kinaesthetic sense of self than an image, although it does not preclude a visual or visualized component. The liberating question then is how to improve, not how to attain perfection which, at the moment of its attainment, is fleeting and fragile. Feldenkrais calls improvement 'a gradual bettering which has no limit' and opposes it to 'cure' which is 'a return to the previously enjoyed state which need not have been excellent or even good' (1990:37).

FM is about developing or extending self-image, and, more specifically, about shifting a fixed way of being/seeing (oneself) into a directable process. Another way of describing what it means to fill out self-image might be the appropriate use of the whole self to perform any action, which can be identified as occurring when there is an even distribution of effort throughout the whole person or 'eutony'². Feldenkrais puts sensation and attention at the centre of the experience of living. He has in mind an ideal of a 'generalized human' capable of ballistically pure movement, even though any individual will never achieve this completely or consistently; everyone can improve and improvement is unlimited.

FM works with the premise of an enworlded, embodied person: both are problematic terms, involving putting something into something, which is why I prefer to think of a person as part of the meshwork. The meshwork reaches

2 Gerda Alexander used 'eutony' to describe her work in 1957 and says it can be achieved by eliminating dysfunction and finding 'an optimal tension balance' (19-20). According to Schechner, Feldenkrais knew Alexander and employed the term knowingly (101).

into and out of the person; she is in and of it. Organization, coordination and orientation in space are important indices for the practitioner and student, as is the timing of a movement. Schilder discussed the body-image as an 'image in space', emphasizing that there are 'no human experiences without the experience of one's own body' which 'always has an extension in space' (1942b:181). He states that 'Space is a creation and a development. Unified space is a late product of development and is in no way given before experience. It also is in no way the form with which experience is melted' (183). This last point requires a little unpacking; Schilder seems to be saying that space, as we conceive of it, is emergent, or a *product* of experience, not a pre-existing thing nor a co-existing thing. This is quite Ingoldian. Feldenkrais is concerned with refining the organization of this extended body, the person, in and as space, and in relation to other extended bodies (animate beings and things) it encounters. According to Ingold, '*every thing is a parliament of lines*'; he points to the origin of the word 'thing' as a 'a gathering of people, and a place where they would meet to resolve their affairs' (2007:5) (his italics). When reapplied to all things and extended bodies which inhabit and embody space, this makes them the focus of exchange. I find specific support from the floor through my foot which transmits in a particular way to the rest of me depending how my foot meets the floor. The dance between me and a puppet, or me and a student in FI, is influenced by how I meet the other person or thing, by how our lines intertwine.

Feldenkrais's notion of self-image is scientific and phenomenological, whilst also including something more. He does not take self-image as a given, shared experience, but sees it as particular to the individual and is interested in the potential for its refinement in any person, not just in cases where it is seriously damaged. FM involves refining the body-image through mental

images and imagination and through movement. Often in FM a movement will be performed on one side of oneself and imagined on the other. It has been shown that thinking of, and even watching movement produces similar brain activity to performing it (Leisman 2). Most people have experienced the discrepancy when going to pick up a bag that was heavier or lighter than expected, or something similar; before action, the person makes an unconscious plan. Gallagher points out that if one is aware of one's body in a motor act, the awareness is a 'pre-reflective, performative awareness rather than a vivid perceptual presence' (91). The strategy used in FM in order to learn is to go into a particular detail of functioning, then return to the whole person repeatedly such that the body schema is improved, drawing conscious attention to the body-image in the process. Awareness and attention are different. The person brings her attention to the details, but increasingly functions as a whole organism with awareness where body-image and schema match. This amounts to knowing what I am doing so I can do what I think I am doing.

Bringing this discussion back into the realm of theatre, improvisation guru Keith Johnstone observes that the body does not end at the skin (echoing Schilder). He refers to a parabola around the person, likening it to director, Yvonne Rainer's image of a Swiss cheese and Lecoq's 'boule'. He quotes Barrault saying:

The living human being is surrounded by a magnetic aura which makes contact with the external objects without any concrete contact with the human body. This aura, or atmosphere, varies in depth according to the vitality of human beings ... The mime must first of all be aware of this boundless contact with things. There is no insulating layer of air between the man and the outside world. Any man who moves causes

ripples in the ambient world in the same way a fish does when it moves in water. (Johnstone 58)

This is quite some responsibility. In spite of Barrault's mysterious terminology, I believe he, Johnstone, Malgren and Lecoq are all talking about what Feldenkrais would call self-image; the way one moves in the world, or projects oneself into the world and accepts the world as one's grounding. Schilder writes specifically about this phenomenon:

One sees again that every actual change in the postural model of the body also changes the surrounding zone, makes it asymmetric according to the specific life situation. We feel these zones especially when somebody else tries to come nearer to us. We feel even that when somebody comes near us he is intruding in our body-image even when he is far from touching us. This emphasizes again that the body-image is a social phenomenon. (2000:212)

While not much can be done about what one 'is' in the world, aside from on a superficial level, a lot can be done about how one moves and this will influence the 'ripples' one makes. This is not to say that the superficial - make-up, clothes, costume, feeling fat/thin, fit/unfit and so on - have no impact on how one moves. Person-image is very pliant; it is in and part of the world, not separate from it, and things can be included in and influence it, as seen in the previous chapter. Johnstone references Malgren observing people who are 'cut off from sensing areas of themselves,' having 'no arms', or 'no legs' and so on (58). The self-image that Feldenkrais is addressing is felt from the inside, but it is also seen from the outside, as Malgren noticed.

On a common, everyday level people respond to personal space, or self-image, and recognize instinctively that not everyone's is the same and that context also shifts it all the time. This relates partly to survival and comfort on a social level, simply allowing each other to breathe and feel unthreatened.

Self-image in FM relates to how widely and evenly awareness is spread throughout oneself, or about how much of oneself one senses. The more one senses, the more malleable the projected image becomes; this is central to the work of the actor. FM is not, however, only concerned with body awareness, but with self-image and Awareness Through Movement. In a handout for his Tel Aviv classes in 1975, Feldenkrais states, 'Training a body to perfect all the possible forms and configurations of its members not only changes the strength and flexibility of the skeleton and muscles, but makes a profound change in the quality of the direction of the self' (2010a:73).

4.2 Feldenkrais and self-image

Feldenkrais's chapter on self-image in *Awareness Through Movement* begins:

Each one of us speaks, moves, thinks and feels in a different way, each according to the image of himself that he has built up over the years. In order to change our mode of action we must change the image of ourselves that we carry within us. What is involved here, of course, is a change in the dynamics of our reactions, and not the mere replacing of one action by another. Such a change involves not only a change in our self-image, but a change in the nature of our motivations, and the mobilization of all the parts of the body concerned. (1990:10)

He makes it clear that this has nothing to do with local improvement, say of a wrist's flexibility. The 'change in the dynamics of our reactions' clearly locates the work on a social level; the onus of the work is on awareness, not on movement per se. He considers habit, the formation of self-image in relation to the world and other people and self-image in the motor cortex where the mouth and thumbs have bigger representations, showing that function (what a

person does) influences the development of self-image. While his claims for human potential might be criticized by today's neuroscientists as falling into the small percentage of brain-use fallacy³, he makes an important point about objective-led learning, claiming it stunts further learning by tending to make a person stop when they have reached sufficiency rather than continue to seek improvement. His ideas apply to *how* the brain (or person, or self) is used, not necessarily how much of it.

He is critical of education in a society which seeks no more than to reproduce itself rather than improve. If children are valued for their achievements, relative to societal expectations, they are robbed of 'spontaneity'; a person should value herself as an individual regardless of her place in society. He recognizes the difficulty, however, in overcoming patterns of action and underlines the need to change their dynamics, contending it is counterproductive to try to use willpower to overcome obstacles. He also sees the lack of awareness of many parts of the body for most people, particularly the parts less clearly involved in daily activity. The size of different parts in the self-image is not coherent with physical reality. He uses this in his method as a touchstone, a means by which to calibrate self-image and the physical reality of the person and her environment more closely with each other.

In this chapter I draw on several lessons from *Alexander Yanai (AY)*; the time has come to explain what this is. AY forms a body of about 600 lessons developed from the early 1950s to the late 1970s in the eight weekly public classes Feldenkrais taught in Tel Aviv. This period of intensive teaching can truly be called practice-based research; Feldenkrais taught a lesson, refined and taught it again until he was happy with it. He recorded over lessons he

³ Even science websites for children now debunk the idea that humans only use a small portion of our brains (Chudler).

deemed lacking. As such, this body of work represents a true opus and, while Feldenkrais continued to refine and develop his work, *AY* offers the most comprehensive vision of his ATM work *as it developed* and affords the opportunity to observe him returning to and refining themes. Later series such as *Esalen 1972* are more like the condensed works of a mature artist smelting all his knowledge and creativity. The *AY* lessons show how he undertook a systematic investigation of human functioning and self-image and transformed this into a process others could follow. They were taught in Hebrew, recorded, and have been transcribed and translated into English by Anat Baniel and Jeremy Krauss⁴.

Since 'we act in accordance with our self-image', improving it becomes the key to potent action and to the fulfilment of intention. Feldenkrais makes the point that 'systematic correction of the image is more useful than correction of single actions' (1990:23). Thus, even in ATM (and FI) lessons which might seem to focus on a local movement, say of the arms and shoulders, such as *AY 18 "Chanukia"* (vol. 1a:103-110), there is a continual process of relating to the whole, both through movement (in *AY 18*, for example, lifting the pelvis is an auxiliary movement and it becomes clear that the spine, ribs and sternum are all involved too) and through bringing awareness to shifts taking place in the student's self-image. FM practitioner trainer, Jerry Karzen, talks about 'Samurai awareness', which I have also heard referred to as 360° vision⁵. This is the ability to maintain awareness of oneself and one's surroundings simultaneously; to be able to focus on the particular and the general at once, including what is above, behind and below me as well as to my front and sides, such that I can act without hesitation in relation to

4 An ongoing process.

5 In a FM practitioner training in 2004 for which I translated.

anything in my environment, and move in any direction without prior reorganization of myself. Feldenkrais considered this kind of super-awareness to be within everyone's grasp.

Many performer trainings work on this kind of awareness; in my own experience, the mask and chorus work at Lecoq comes to mind, where limited vision in masks requires the development of other ways of sensing what's happening on stage, and the large group in a chorus learns to flock like birds, each individual sensing where to go. Learning occurs in the group, not just in the individual. It is social. Lecoq's 'équilibre du plateau' exercise, used to prepare chorus work, is a brilliant example of group-dependent learning. An audience on four sides witnesses the entrance of one actor, followed by another and another and so on. The whole group, including the audience, learns together to judge the 'balance' of the space, but also the timing of the entrances and movement within the scene. It is the theatrical situation pared down to its core; audience, space and players work together. Feldenkrais taught ATMs where he makes group organization a focus (e.g. *Esalen 1972*, "Lesson 34: Rolling..."). In puppetry, in the case of multiple puppeteers on one puppet, and/or many puppeteers in a limited space, the skill of expanding one's awareness beyond oneself and working as an element in bigger organism comes into play.

FM trainer, Elizabeth Beringer, compares Feldenkrais's hunches and deductions based on the neurophysiology of his time with current findings on neuroplasticity and systemic complexity (2001). On moving, sensing, thinking and feeling, she says, 'It's not that one affects another - they are each, to a greater or smaller extent, an integral part of every action' (36). This was Feldenkrais's opinion, although he thought this was due to the proximity of and diffusion between structures in the brain, rather than the result of the complete

functional integrity of all these elements, which has now been shown, for example, by Damasio (2000). Beringer references Penfold's homunculus, also used by Feldenkrais in *Awareness Through Movement* to show the 'representation' of the body in the brain. However, Preester and Knockaert point out that neuroscience has largely abandoned this 'somatotopic' idea of representation or map in the cortex and thalamus, saying 'there is a recording of constantly moving functional activation patterns' and 'representational plasticity, shaped and modulated to a considerable extent by the unique experience of the organism in its environment' (12). This actually works better with Feldenkrais's outlook than the more rigid idea of the homunculus.

Self-image is a useful catch-all term to describe the functional unity of the person. Reese summarizes: self-image 'stands for the functional whole, irreducible to causal analysis' (2015:301). He suggests that self-image is 'more like a map than a picture' and that it forms 'the core sense of self, an embodied, kinaesthetically rooted sense of place, wholeness and competence' (71). Beringer's notion of 'self-imaging' is helpful as it avoids the static connotation of the noun. She traces the idea to von Foerster, who remarked to her, 'The Self should not be a noun, but a process: selfing' (2001:36), echoing Buckminster Fuller, 'I seem to be a verb'. However, the term I prefer is person-image as I think it is important to retain a sense of something that can be fixed into an image, although it is an image that is subject to transformation.

FM uses movement as a focus to increase awareness of self-image since it has a clear manifestation in the material world, unlike thoughts and feelings. For the practitioner giving an FI, either there is movement in the upper ribs of her student when she breathes, for example, or there is not. For the student things are a little more murky. I may sense movement where there is none, or not sense it where there is. I may have my left ear closer to my left shoulder

when lying but sense that my right ear is closer to my right shoulder. FM develops the student's capacity to sense what is happening in her movement, and in her stillness. The practitioner finds ways to communicate this to her, verbally and through touch. In ATM, this is usually through questions such as, what is your sense of your left leg and right leg? What change do you notice in the way you're lying on the floor since the lesson began? In FI, I am also asking questions. I return to the student's head, pelvis and feet throughout the lesson both for myself, to see how the movement is developing (does the head/pelvis feel lighter or move more easily? Is it more available for movement?), and for the student, to allow her to sense differences. Developing self-image is a large part of the work, and it develops in relation to my sensing, thoughts and emotions about it.

4.2.1 'Improvement'

Feldenkrais did not work with or on bodies and neither does FM; he worked with people. In a recording from *Amherst*, he says:

A functional integration, not a local improvement of the body. ...My body – who is 'my'? With this woman I had her body cured completely, but she was as ill as she was before, therefore it was improperly cured, because she should have been cured, not her body... I didn't realise she had such an idiotic dichotomy. I should have treated her, not her body. If you treat the body, the person will remain ill as before. You have to treat the person, not the body' (1980 01:39:45)⁶.

⁶ Chiming with Feldenkrais, Minh-ha writes, 'We do not have bodies, we are our bodies, and we are ourselves while being the world. We write - think and feel - (with) our entire bodies rather than only (with) our minds or hearts. It is a perversion to consider thought the product of one specialised organ, the brain, and feeling, that of the heart' (258). Current science is beginning to find neurons in the gut, for example, supporting the idea of whole person intelligence (Watzke).

My feeling as a person is tightly tied to my self-image. Feldenkrais uses the idea of improving self-image as a means to improve functioning for the person. But what exactly is meant by 'improvement'? Not local improvement, as in the case above. Improvement in functions might sometimes be clear: I want to be able to lift my leg up higher in an arabesque; I want to be able to play a fast piece on the violin; I want to improve my performance in an academic subject like mathematics. The last example is tricky, but it might be possible to show a benefit from the method. Improvement must be in the whole person so she can *use* what she learns.

The origins of the method lie partly in Feldenkrais's need to defend himself and his fellows from violent attacks in Palestine in the 1910s (Feldenkrais 1944, Reese 2015). So the method could also be used to improve violent methods of attack and make them more efficient. Feldenkrais had a humanist project and his early experience in hand-to-hand combat was concerned with defence and survival, not attack, but nevertheless, anything can be improved, including methods for killing or hurting people. Improvement is not necessarily positive. FM can be used with specific ends in mind even though this goes against its openness, and might be seen as an aberration of the method.

Sheets-Johnstone points out that FM is not focused on the future in the way most activity is; my intention is to cross the street, bang in the nail and so on. She calls this 'where-I-am-not-yet' and contrasts it with awareness brought to the 'here-now-happening' that FM asks for (1979:25): 'By focusing attention on what we are doing rather than what is to be done, we learn to discriminate between what is easy and efficient and what is wasteful and strained' (26). The improvement in FM comes from here-now awareness, also vital for performance.

4.2.2 Awareness (through movement)

If a key to awareness through movement is the ongoing transformation of self-image, we need to know what Feldenkrais meant by 'awareness'.

Philosopher and FM practitioner, Richard Shusterman, claims that for FM, as well as other practices such as meditation and AT:

explicit awareness and conscious control are key, as is the use of representations or visualizations. These disciplines do not aim to erase the crucial level of unreflective behavior by the (impossible) effort of making us explicitly conscious of all our perception and action. They simply seek to improve unreflective behavior that hinders our experience and performance. In order to effect this improvement, however, the unreflective action or habit must be brought into conscious critical reflection (although only for a limited time) so that it can be grasped and worked on more precisely. (2005:165)

While this is a clear and useful summary of how FM works, it is also partial and lacks subtlety in that it attends only to 'conscious awareness', which it frames as something like 'paying attention to', or simply 'attending to' oneself. In a discussion between biophysicist, Aharon Katzir, who pioneered research into dynamic systems in his field, and Feldenkrais, they set up a basic premise that 'consciousness and awareness without action is impossible' (Beringer 2010:163). They conclude that 'the uniqueness of awareness is its ability to create schemas', which Katzir sees as possibly 'the act of creation itself' (175). By 'schemas', I understand them to mean ways of doing. Thus, awareness allows one to invent ways of doing that are neither attached to societal or cultural norms, nor to the ways one has done the same thing before. Each moment is fresh, and involves the ability to attend *both* to oneself and to that which is not oneself. Perhaps, rather than distinguishing between self and not-self, it would be more accurate simply to talk about what is happening. Katzir

says, 'When you put awareness to the elements, you become sensitive so that you can shift the elements' (174). The elements include everything.

Feldenkrais cites the ability of a child 'to look at something without preparing the fixed mechanical feedback, but instead to illuminate what is found'. The child has 'the ability to observe while he is listening to himself' (175). There are unlimited ways of interacting with, or seeing something⁷. The direction of awareness inwards or outwards can exist without the two directions being functionally separate. Feldenkrais constantly refers back to awareness of the outside world (the number of windows in a building you regularly pass, or struts on the chair you sit in every day) as a test of awareness generally. Therefore, perhaps FM could be summed up as practising awareness in the realm of the self or self-image in order to expand this beyond the self. Or inward-directed attention as practice for outward-directed attention and, ultimately, for diffuse attention in all directions; awareness.

Feldenkrais says, 'Once the ability to differentiate is improved, the details of the self or the surroundings can be better sensed; we become aware of what we are doing and not what we say or think we are doing' (2010a:72). Here, self and surroundings are on a par. The ability to differentiate might be between effort or no effort in a movement of my shoulder, or between how hard or soft the ground feels, or how heavy a chair, or my leg feels to lift. A self-image that is unrelated to the 'outside world' is clearly impossible. To lift my shoulder when lying down, I must press something into the floor.

In *Awareness Through Movement*, Feldenkrais simply states, 'the delay between thought and action is the basis for awareness,' elaborating, 'this

⁷ This kind of creativity is referred to by education reformer, Ken Robinson, giving his 'cod example' of asking different groups of people to find as many uses as possible for a paper clip. Small children outperform every other group, including their older selves (Robinson 00:08:20).

possibility of creating an image of an action and then delaying its execution - postponing it or preventing it altogether - is the basis of imagination and intellectual judgment' (1990:45). He is referring to a phenomenon he uses in ATM that can be practised - observing and using the imagination to shift one's image of oneself in movement - rather than something one can or would want to be doing all the time; if I slip on a banana peel I have no time to stop and observe, so hopefully I already have patterns of movement that will prevent me from hurting myself too badly. Without going into brain anatomy, awareness - the delay between thought and action - seems to be related to the relatively large neocortex in humans. Self-image is what exists in this delay and can be thought of therefore as a function of the neocortex.

Ives argues, in response to an article on the efficacy of FM, that while the 'body awareness' or 'internal focus' he imagines FM uses 'may be a useful strategy at times for certain conditions, namely those with a large psychological dimension ... an external focus is more effective in learning and performing motor skills'. He claims it has 'been shown that movements ranging from object manipulation tasks to whole body movement and balance tasks were acquired, performed, and retained better with an external focus'. He also notes however that 'high-level endurance athletes tend to adopt an associative strategy in which focus is placed on internal bodily sensations', but argues that 'association appears to work for low strategy endurance sports with a low motor skill component'. While he identifies 'an inappropriate attentional focus and an overemphasis on kinesthetic training' in FM, he allows that 'self-regulation theory' may be a framework within which to study the method, which he claims has 'a psychological emphasis' and may affect men and women differently' (119).

Ives has an outsider's knowledge of FM; Buchanan, to whom he is responding, an insider's. It is in Buchanan and Ulrich's interest (and perhaps also in mine) to argue for the efficacy of FM. However, Ives seems to miss the point that FM is not concerned with better motor performance per se, but with self-regulation, or, put another way, choice or freedom, and indeed Feldenkrais himself states the obvious point that 'self-knowledge' 'can interfere with the carrying out of actions' (1990:46). (The banana, which Feldenkrais refers to in his talk *On Awareness*.) Ives contrasts motor and psychological performance as if they were unrelated, yet you cannot have one without the other. Buchanan and Ulrich send the ball back to Ives with a torrent of references from systems theorists to ecological psychologists and neuroscientists to the effect that 'physiological and psychological categories include many subsystems that interact, and, thus, affect each other' (2003:125). It should also be emphasized that any 'body awareness' or 'internal focus' used in FM is never isolated from the environment, nor can it be. The floor, at the very least, is always part of the action and my awareness because of gravity. The focus in FM is expanded rather than inward, as seen above. Equally, while achieving specific goals is very much *not* part of the method's protocols, the notion of function is central to it⁸.

Function in FM is both complex and simple. A function might be simply doing something, an action. The OED gives the definitions, 'the action of performing' and 'activity; action in general, whether physical or mental. Of a person: Bearing, gestures', as well as a basic operation in computing 'that corresponds to a single instruction' ("function"). There are many ways of

8 In an ATM, Haller gives a direction to do a movement 'without achievement, without seeking any outcome or improvement, without performance'. The ability to observe one-self in action enables one to notice differences, which becomes the foundation for change. One of his students comes up with the phrase 'an exercise in letting go of ambition' for ATM (2010).

performing the function of sitting down on a chair. Some however will include actions not related to sitting down on the chair and some of these will actively interfere with the action of sitting down on the chair. The function is just sitting down on the chair without the other stuff. Self-image influences how I perform any action. *Functional* Integration aims to clarify my actions so that I can just perform the function I intend (such as sitting down on the chair), such that my self-image doesn't interfere with it. In a way this is like the basic operation in computing 'that corresponds to a single instruction'; sit on the chair. This is related to 'neutral' in theatre and functional movement.

Gallagher's reflections on proprioception and its lack in the case of Ian Waterman fall within this discussion on awareness, pertaining to the role of proprioception in the sense of self and agency. Waterman might be said to have no self-image or awareness in a typical Feldenkraisian sense. However, he learnt to use vision to orient himself in space (if he shuts his eyes, he falls over). His case might lead to a desire to reframe awareness in a more supple way, simply as the ability to use any kind of perception to move oneself actively and meaningfully in the world⁹. The movements of a baby are meaningful in that they are part of a process of discovery¹⁰. Gallagher does not endorse a motor theory of perception but wants 'to treat movement as a constraint on rather than a cause of perception' (8 n.6), chiming with Berthoz' comments on the limitations skeletal structure places on movement such that the brain has fewer aspects of movement to control. The movement capacities of the human body allow coherent perception through limitation, thus a sense

9 It would be interesting to know how Waterman's vestibular system is functioning; although he seems to orient visually, perhaps there is some residual intermodal perception in spite of his lack of proprioception.

10 Anat Baniel spoke about the erroneous idea that a baby's movements are random at a workshop I attended in London in 2017. The baby is learning to organize herself, so her movements are not random, although they might be uncontrolled or lack intention.

of oneself, which is particular and individual. Lack of proprioception 'reorients the attentional structure of consciousness' (Gallagher 58), which is 'normally of an intermodally seamless spatial system' (59). Gallagher's distinction between egocentric and allocentric frames of reference is important to a Feldenkraisian approach where skeletal awareness acts a bridge between the two and is used to improve self-image.

In relation to Ingold, awareness as Feldenkrais understood it might be said to be of the meshwork, or seen as a Deleuzian 'becoming'; it relates to the present moment as it is playing out. Ingold contrasts, 'the hub-and-spokes model of place' where points are connected in a network with 'place as a knot of entangled lifelines' (2007:98):

The knot, by contrast, does not contain life but is rather formed of the very lines along which life is lived. These lines are bound together *in* the knot, but they are not bound *by* it. To the contrary they trail beyond it, only to become caught up with other lines in other knots. Together they make up what I have called a meshwork. Every place, then, is a knot in the meshwork, and the threads from which it is traced are lines of wayfaring. (99)

Awareness via expanded person-image connects into the meshwork.

Awareness is of the lines, of the knot (person-image), and of the knotting (person-imaging). I find this metaphor helpful.

4.3 Why change? Is FM a normative practice?¹¹

Feldenkrais always entertained the opposite of an idea in order to test it. Kaetz, writing about his Hasidic roots, references the Talmudic study model where there is no master, just two students in dialogue (2007). This fosters critical thinking and self-reliance without the need to turn to an authority. FM might be criticized as championing a particular way of being as right (moving in a ballistically pure way, exercising diffuse awareness and aiming for a complete self-image) and assuming that everyone should want or need to go towards this. It might be criticized as a form of self-surveillance. This notion comes from Foucault who writes:

there is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself. (qtd. in Bordo 253)

Is FM a form of self-surveillance? If it is, where does it get its model and why? It claims to work on learning and change, but why change? What's wrong with me as I am? Who is to say I should improve? And who says what the improvement should be? Mansbach considers that both Foucault and Feldenkrais were concerned with how we become who we are, how self-

11 An adjunct to these questions are the issues of wellbeing and focus on self. Feldenkrais gave workshops at Esalen, a centre 'pioneering deep change in self and society' founded in 1962 (*Esalen*), thus placing him in the 'Human Potential Movement' which has been criticized for its emphasis on self (Olliver). Kapsali (2014) offers an analysis of FM as being inextricably bound up with the capitalist context in which it arose and in which it is commercialized as a health or self-development practice. She identifies the importance of recognizing this if we are to tap into its empowering potential in performer training. If health is made a matter of personal and moral choice, unconnected to the socio-economic and political fabric, far from being empowering, FM and other health and well-being practices are seen as depoliticizing their subjects through their focus on the individual at the expense of broader political awareness. See Evans (2009) for a broader socio-political and historical overview of movement training for actors.

transformation is possible. While Foucault's approach is to analyse the structures and functioning of society and culture, Feldenkrais analyses the structures and functioning of the organism. Feldenkrais wants to restore organic individuality by disassembling habitual behaviour. Thus, in Mansbach's words, 'the method contributes to the process of individuation and the constitution of our own selves, by awareness and transformation of our body-image'. But the question of transformation into what and why is still not addressed.

In his review of *Awareness Through Movement*, Kemp makes Feldenkrais's aim into a very concrete question: 'How to move so that the world would not collapse if I were its pivot. Or more modestly: How to become more pleasing to myself and thereby to others'. He sums up why FM is non-normative but rather about individual experience, which will produce many different ways of being. He also sees FM as realistic, which is not to say unoptimistic or unidealistic: 'It is not the hinges of the whole world, which nobody can manipulate, that are at issue here; but our bones, muscles, nerves - the rather splendidly fashioned dust we are made of'. Depending on how it is understood, taught and contextualized, however, FM could be mistaken for being about correct movement and posture, and therefore prescriptive¹². It could also be mistaken for being about inner mindfulness or self-awareness, which could lead to accepting outer circumstances without challenging them and/or towards incompetence in real action. It is worth remaining alive to the idea that some possible effects of the work are not its ultimate aim. I understand it as being about expanded awareness and sensing difference,

¹² Even for people who have a good understanding of the method, it is possible to get lost in trying to find a movement, get it 'right', and thus lose sight of the real goal, which is increased awareness. It is almost irrelevant how you end up doing a movement; what is important is how you have been able to use your attention and awareness.

leading to potent action which fulfils the individual's organic needs, rather than fitting with society's values or norms. Organic needs emanate from the person herself rather than in response to societal or parental expectations or to cultural habits.

But what about when the individual's organic needs or intentions are not only in conflict with society's expectations but also detrimental to others? The law attempts to regulate human behaviour by providing sanctions against those who act against others. It is debatable where civil liberty should end and state intervene, and the law does not treat all individuals equally, even when it claims to. Perhaps 'organic need' can simply refer to feeling one can choose how to behave in any situation so long as no harm is done to others? Clearly this leaves room for interpretation; 'offence' might be considered harm, and is a murky term. But, after the law, common sense must surely prevail. An art-work may be deemed offensive by some, provocative by others, tame by still others, and ten years later, tame by those who previously found it offensive.

Birke suggests that Judith Butler's concept of performativity might be used to think about the "way the body works', its interiority' (45). The roles people perform influence their bodily workings; what you do with yourself influences what roles you can play (in life or in performance). Habit moulds the body, and the person. By doing something different, or differently, which is what happens in FM, you can change your body/self and perform something else. You cannot help but perform a culturally produced version of gender, or (a culturally produced) transgression of gender, but you will not be stuck with it; you can choose a different mode. This, surely, is empowering. With the proviso that it remains useful to consider what power is attained and to what uses it is put.

In FM, we place emphasis on the idea of force travelling through the skeleton in functional anatomy. The main difference between female and male skeletons is in the shape of the pelvis; the female pelvis has an open, circular pelvic inlet as opposed to the male's narrower, heart-shaped inlet; the female has a broader sciatic notch, a wider angle where the two pubic bones meet in front and more outwardly flared hip bones. Males also 'tend to have larger, more robust bones and joint surfaces, and more bone development at muscle attachment sites' ("Male or Female?"). These differences become more pronounced with puberty. There is a question then around the relative influences of biology and culture on adult human skeletons, but the difference between genders is not so large that functional organization is influenced to a great degree. In adulthood, it is not so much skeletal structure which affects acture and movement but social influence. A focus on skeletal awareness bypasses psychology and gender differences to a large extent and they become subsumed to other anatomical differences; some people have longer legs, wider hips, heavier bones. So does FM ignore gender? Does it normalize male experience? One answer would be to say that it does ignore gender, but it does not normalize male experience since it deals with each individual whatever his/her starting point or capacity, and works within his/her physical limits (which are not the same as his/her functional limits, which can be expanded). Physical limits might be bone structure or tightness of ligaments, which affects movement potential in the joints. For human adults, it now makes more sense to talk about cis-gender and trans-gender rather than male and female. Cis-gender being those who identify with their apparent biological gender at birth and trans-gender being those who do not. It becomes clear here how person-image is of central importance to the human being, since it relates to the relationship between how I feel and behave in the world, and how I appear to

others. But what about playing with person-image? This must be where choice comes in, so that I am not stuck in one mode - denying I have big breasts or a penis for example. I need to integrate the fact of having big breasts into how I would like to be, or the fact of having a penis to the fact that I feel like a woman.

From a feminist perspective, FM might be criticized for ignoring what Grosz calls 'breasted existence' (1994:108) in her discussion of feminist critiques of Merleau-Ponty which draws on Irigaray, Butler and Young. However, FM also ignores what might be called 'penised experience' simply because penises, like breasts, do not have bones in them. As such, neither are part of the moving, biomechanical person; they are fleshy appendages. But clearly both *are* involved in, and have an influence on, self-image. A woman with big breasts might adopt a flexion pattern in order to minimize their presence, or an extension pattern because she wants to thrust them into the world. Similarly a man with a large penis might hold his legs together and rock his pelvis back to withdraw his member into himself, or he might adopt a wide stance and thrust his pelvis forward. All manner of postural patterns is possible in each case and these schema are achieved through skeletal organization. However, it would be foolish to claim that the fleshy parts of a person play no part in how she habitually organizes herself. FM focuses on skeletal organization but does not deny sexual difference since the skeleton is merely a route to, or handle on, the whole person. It does not concern itself with why a person is the way she is, but rather with how that person might explore new territory. If a flexion pattern is present because of large breasts FM might offer that woman ways of exploring both flexion and extension that result in greater acceptance of her breasts as part of her self-image such that she no longer feels the need to withdraw that area by habitual flexion. In this way FM can be

seen as being a potentially liberating practice in that it encourages self-image to accommodate physical and biomechanical need, without ignoring psychological need. But FM does not directly address the reasons people are the way they are, nor the psychological outcomes that may arise from them. It only concerns itself with movement, which is seen as the key to the person as a whole.

Feldenkrais's use of the concept of five cardinal lines to represent the person (the spine, two legs and two arms) might be seen as excluding people who are different in some way from this 'norm' (amputees, for example). It would be possible to refer instead to the four corners of the abdomen, or the two outermost extremities near the head, and the two farthest from the head. The movements in various planes of action of these points in the trunk is effectively what produces movement in the limbs of a person who has them. Movements in these planes are important for any person, no matter how apparently different from the five line model they are. Feldenkrais's terminology might now seem unfortunate, but he certainly didn't expect or want his method to stop with him; I think he would have adapted it if teaching ATM to a room of double-amputees.

Rather than being a normative process, FM suggests everyone can improve in a way appropriate for each person; but there seems to be no getting away from the assumption that everyone needs to improve! Improvement is relative to the person. Take running. It might not necessarily mean to run faster; it might mean to run more comfortably, or further. Regarding playing the piano, it might mean learning tunes more easily, taking a greater pleasure in playing or playing a fast piece that one couldn't play before. In one's relations with one's family, it might mean having more patience, listening more or being more decisive and having more energy.

Improvement is an open enough concept to accommodate most people's desires. In a FI lesson, an opening question might be, what would you like to improve or do better? Organic need and improvement are connected to desire. People have desires about things they'd like to do, or stop doing. Working on self-image, even if this is not explicitly named, is related to making a shift such that I am the kind of person who can do such and such, or who can stop doing such and such, rather than compulsively doing/not doing it. There is not an obvious connection between why having a more supple sternum-rib connection might help me write a short story, but it is related to how I am functioning and how I am using myself, which affects everything else.

Dance scholar and FM practitioner, Isabelle Ginot, finds, 'the Feldenkrais community lacks a critical distance from Feldenkrais's writings and the oral tradition of his teaching' (153). Her aim is 'to bring Feldenkrais practice more in tune with social spaces where it might be crucially effective'¹³. She points out the discrepancy between Feldenkrais's writing about 'the social aspects of the construction of self-image' and his individual practical response whereby 'developing a better self-image, individuals will evolve towards more autonomy, self-reliance and freedom, and this is the path to social change' (154-5). Reappraising Feldenkrais's terms in an attempt to use more specific and consistent language that can be understood in the professional circles within which she is communicating (the medical and social services), she identifies three variants on the concept of self-image present in Feldenkrais's thought:

¹³ Ginot is implementing the use of FM in social institutions working with people with HIV and AIDS; she works with people who have become truly marginal, enabling them to regain a sense of themselves, their bodies, voices and social presence.

1. The 'neuro-scientific 'homunculus' which 'might very well be confused with an image in the brain, and perhaps even an image of the brain'.
2. The 'anthropological or sociological', 'where culture, society, education and family are the main causes of faulty development of the self'.
3. The experiential, 'belonging to the subject's use of himself or herself' (156).

She notes that the third of these, which seems to dominate in ATMs, and relates to full awareness of oneself in action, is ironically less present in Feldenkrais's writings than the first two. Perhaps because this awareness is precisely a unique affair and an unattainable ideal. It is something to work with rather than for.

Ginot draws on Gallagher's distinction between 'body-image' and 'body schema', terms which, along with self-image, Feldenkrais uses almost interchangeably. Gallagher refers to the possibility of improving the performance of body schema such that the body is pushed 'into the recesses of awareness' (34). He elaborates, 'The dancer or the athlete who practices long and hard to make deliberate movements proficient so that movement is finally accomplished by the body without conscious reflection ... uses a consciousness of bodily movement to train body-schematic performance' (55). This is precisely what the FM sets out to do through, as Ginot puts it, the 'interplay of body-image and body schema' (154) and the development of skeletal awareness. 'The body effaces itself', in Gallagher's phrase, 'granting the subject a freedom to think of other things' (55). For Ginot, conceiving of FM as the 'interplay of body-image and body schema' has 'fulfilled many of the needs

of our context of work' in the social and health services, facilitating an understanding of FM:

First, these two notions are prominent in Feldenkrais' writings, and are also subject to contemporary research and interest that may reframe and give new precision to Feldenkrais' intentions. Second, as descriptive vocabulary, they are part of the professional cultures of many social workers. Third, they are transversal notions that include social, psychological and perceptive dimensions of the self. And lastly, most professionals agree that the many aspects of social exclusion and chronic disease strongly affect 'body-image'. (154)¹⁴

Importantly, and following the discussion around FM as a normative practice, Ginot challenges the idea that FM is inherently empowering and, aligning herself with Fortin (2008), agrees it might just as well be 'a subjecting technique, depending on context and use'; she is investigating 'the political uses of somatics in social work' (Ginot 154). I want to keep in mind her challenge and ensure a critical distance from assumptions about the method, seeing it as a generative tool rather than an ultimate practice.

In performer training, one of the uses it *might* be put to is the cultivation of the body beautiful¹⁵. Although as a practice FM is not model-based; there are no mirrors and no demonstrations, the notion of improvement might still be used as if there were a precise end in mind. FM does harbour notions of right and wrong movement in the sense that ballistically pure movement is 'right' or 'good' and any movement which sends forces sheering

14 Puppetry has a presence in therapy and education (Salvage, Shön) that I do not address extensively in this thesis but body-image/body schema and the use of puppets could be usefully linked in such contexts.

15 See Shusterman for an argument as to why it doesn't tend to encourage this however. He contrasts practices with internal and external focuses in his elaboration of 'somaesthetics' (2000, Part II, Ch. 7).

across the skeleton is 'wrong' or potentially dangerous. But where other practices might look at the external aspect of movement, FM looks at its function from the inside. Its 'rights' and 'wrongs' are questions of physics and physiology. In puppetry training, especially in short workshops - often the only formal training a puppeteer might have - there is frequently less of a focus on the body and presence of the performer than there is in dancer and actor training¹⁶. Much of the technique of puppeteering is about organizing oneself in relation to things (puppets, castelets/booths, scenery, bridges, lights) and less about what exactly one does oneself. Awareness and the qualities of touch and attention are as important as the visible movement produced. Sounds like FM. However, the rise of 'manipulating', 'corps-castelet' and the work of artists such as Moussoux-Bonté and Schönbein¹⁷, who push these to their limits, means that increasingly what the puppeteer does with herself is the focus of attention (Guidicelli).

The notion of person-image itself, when conceived of as multiple, non-normative and in constant flux, provides a basis from which to make and analyse (puppet) performance which is more semiotically-minded than purely focused on the visual aesthetic. In Chapter 6 I use person-image as an analytical tool to look at specific examples of (puppet) performance in greater detail.

¹⁶ A notable exception is at ESNAM, France, where movement, aikido, tai chi and FM are, or have been at times, part of the curriculum. The aikido classes are shared with the local police force! HDMK Stuttgart, Germany, also has movement classes including FM. At The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London, the puppetry students receive movement but not FM lessons while acting students also receive FM lessons.

¹⁷ Some of these are treated in Chapter 6.

4.4 Self-image in ATM

How did Feldenkrais actually use self-image in lessons and how can this be related to puppetry? Aside from the majority of ATMs which revolve around a movement theme, there are also some which are more directly about self-image. In *Awareness Through Movement*, Feldenkrais proposes twelve lessons, two of which address self-image head-on. "Lesson 8, Perfecting the self-image" revolves around the student lifting a foot in front of her towards her face and the top of her head whilst sitting. The emphasis is on improvement, going potentially from a self-image which doesn't allow her to get her foot anywhere near her face to one where she can easily bring the foot to her forehead or further, or where there is at least some improvement in the ease and quality of the movement, even if the distance travelled by the foot remains the same. The search, not necessarily for bigger, but better, easier movement, distinguishes FM from much other movement work. Feldenkrais emphasizes the importance of rest in order to be able to observe changes and proposes engaging the imagination to work on improving the movement, underlining that 'there is no limit to improvement' (1990:136) and making the case that 'observing the self is better than mechanical repetition' (137).

"Lesson 11, Becoming aware of parts of which we are not conscious with the help of those of which we are conscious" (a nicely explanatory, if not very succinct title!) is a version of a lesson from AY. In AY 303 "Self-image, the line of a ball that rolls" (vol. 7a:2079-2086), Feldenkrais asks the student to sense the middle of each part of herself starting from the heel, moving up to the pelvis by imagining an iron ball pressing down on the body and sensing at what point it would not roll to one side or the other, or push the body to one side or the other. He asks the student to feel where this is rather than identify where she thinks it should be. Then he leads the same process in relation to the hand

and arm, asking the student to go up and down the lines clarifying any vague points, then to connect leg and arm lines by imagining lifting a limb and seeing where the ball wants to travel from knee/thigh to pelvis, or from elbow to shoulder blade. He asks the student to think of lifting both the left arm and the right leg to see how they connect.

This kind of lesson making use of the imagination and a virtual object - here an 'iron ball' - is precisely the kind I found most difficult initially. Not only is the student being asked to imagine movement, but also the effect of a relatively bizarre environmental factor - an iron ball rolling on the body. Yet there is also something alluring about this work in terms of exploratory puppetry, suggesting many possibilities for working with imaginary objects. There is an affiliation with Lecoq's work on becoming materials, his 'mimodynamique', and (his and others') mime techniques more generally, but imagining the influence of imaginary objects on oneself as a means to clarify self-image is a new variation on these. Why should a puppeteer be interested in that which cannot be seen? Because it offers a generative constraint that might produce new ways of being in performance, but also a way of refining puppetry performance by working with one's real puppets and objects in imagination. I return to this in Chapter 5.

The series of lessons, AY 338-341, "Primary Image", "Simpler", "Simpler thighs" and "Simpler on the stomach and back" (vol. 7b:2313-2344), gives a clear idea of what Feldenkrais is getting at with self-image. He opens AY 339 by recognizing that when he asks students to pay attention to how they are lying, many don't understand what he means. He asks the student to begin to sense herself as if she were blind; first the face, then the sacrum, then the spine. Feldenkrais acknowledges that parts of the spine are likely not to be clear immediately; he recognizes that the attention he asks for comes with

practice and without it there is no improvement; it is crucial to his method. In this lesson, although he starts with self-scanning whilst lying, he goes on to use movement to extend self-image. "Primary Image" and "Simpler" both work with the idea of five cardinal lines. In "Simpler", he clarifies this to a 'precise image of one long line so it draws the whole back - with the head above as a circle, with two lines for the arms, and with two lines for legs' (2323).

The idea of five lines is often used in passing in ATMs, but here it forms the basis for the whole lesson and is expressed in a particular way of interest to me here¹⁸. He asks the student to imagine the length of the body line and distance of the limb lines from it and from the head, to sense the connection of the shoulders and hips where there are dimples on the back, to sense the five lines in sitting with the legs a bit bent and arms parallel to floor, then to come into the same position as in sitting but on the back on the floor with arms and legs a bit bent in the air. As the lesson progresses he asks the student to roll in various directions. He asks her not to think of 'the real form' but imagine just lines or straws and he underlines this idea throughout the lesson, asking for a 'concise image' involving 'imaginary abstract lines, fine, thin and light, without sensation, without any connection to reality'; 'fine lines without any weight... without any substance'. His emphasis on 'the essence of the image of the body' (2315) is interesting; it is elusive for fleshy, emotional human beings, but it is what puppets concretize; they are what they are.

The way self-image is explored in AY 338-341 speaks very clearly to the puppet as the concrete abstraction of an idea. Feldenkrais asks for a clear disassociation from the person's embodied reality:

¹⁸ It is also the basis for "Lesson 1: Scanning" in the *Esalen 1972* series (Feldenkrais 2012:1-7), but without the sense of abstraction of the fine lines without substance. It is notable that Feldenkrais starts this series of 43 lessons designed as a training to teach ATM with a lesson explicitly involving self-image and the five lines.

The whole entire picture goes to the left. The whole picture means that you must make small movements if you do not want to ruin the relationship of these limbs in relation to reality because with one it can be that one shoulder is higher, one hip hurts, the stomach is fat, and the head could be sick. This is not important. Do not get involved with it. Just see this imaginary drawn image that does not really have a real connection with the body except for these general lines. Do this movement until the moment it is possible to distinguish that this entire small drawing, this whole abstract image, moves a bit to the left. (2314)

The lines flow from the points (an image is given of the hip joints 12-15 cm above the floor); they are directions, 'approximately the direction of the bones of the skeleton'; 'content is just length and emptiness, without any sensory meaning...without volume, without weight, without size...just their direction and their lengths' (2316). This seems in some sense to be different to what Feldenkrais asks for much of the time, which is for the student to pay attention to how she is actually doing a movement.

This essentialized and abstract notion of the body in the self-image might be seen as problematic, and perilously close to a Platonic concept of a world of Ideas versus a concrete reality of Forms. How can this essentializing be part of a method of becoming? I would argue because it is about the person's ever-changing relationship with her sense of her 'concise, abstract imagination of the body' (2316) and by the fact that the student is asked to imagine it through the experiential process of movement. At the end of AY 340, which continues to work with the theme of five lines, Feldenkrais asks the students to roll to the side to come to stand '*Recreating the image* the whole time' (2335) (emphasis in the text¹⁹). He recognizes that our capacity to

¹⁹ The text is a translation of a transcript, but presumably gives a sense of Feldenkrais's stress.

imagine is a potent source for improvement and that imagination is an ongoing process from moment to moment. Perfection can be imagined and playing with this allows a person to play with the relationship between herself and her imagined self.

Ingold writes that, 'the shaman heals by dropping lines into the body,' (2007:61) and while I am not entirely sure what he means by this²⁰, it strikes a chord with Feldenkrais's use of five lines. Ingold opposes the shaman to the Western surgeon who stitches up 'the lines he already finds within the body'. He seems to contrast a Western approach to the surfaces and fragments of the body with the shaman who drops lines into the person as a whole. 'Dropping lines into the body' could describe the work on self-image in FM. Sheets-Johnstone has called the listening, noticing and paying attention in FM as reaching the 'unlived lines of our bodies' as we 'reforge our body-image' (1990:28).

'Scanning' oneself is a process often included at the beginning and end of an ATM, in resting moments and sometimes occupying the whole lesson. It can take many forms, but involves asking students to become aware of themselves, of their weight or lightness on the floor, whether they feel as if they are sinking or floating, which parts of themselves are in/not in contact with the floor, the imprint they are making on the floor (in ink, or as if in sand), to imagine themselves as five lines, the relationship of parts to each other such distance of legs/arms from the mid-line, the distance of ear from shoulder on each side, the relative distance of parts of themselves from the ceiling (nose/toes/chest nearer), the skeletal connections throughout themselves and so on. The ways of scanning are limited only by the

²⁰ Neither was a friend who is training to be a Shamanic Practitioner.

practitioner's imagination. I've been asked by Karzen to imagine myself sliced into virtual images by a machine working parallel to the floor I am lying on, so slivers (for me) first of nose, forehead, toes, chest, right side of pelvis, left side, front of lumbar vertebrae and so on through myself²¹. According to Karzen, Feldenkrais didn't use scanning much in his lessons in *AY*²², but it has become something that is used, particularly in practitioner trainings, to develop a sense of self-image. Karzen also points out, however, there are parts of ourselves that come in and out of awareness or consciousness, as if we don't want to find or feel them. Haller draws attention to the fact that awareness and perception of the skeleton is implicit; there is no nervous system *in* the skeleton itself and therefore no representation of it in the brain. Every other part of the person, the fascia, organs, musculature, tissue, cells and the periosteum *around* the bone have representations in the brain, but not the skeleton itself. The only way to feel your skeleton is in relation to something else; the environment.

The exploration of self-image through imagination is accepted as problematic; Feldenkrais's biographer, amongst others, acknowledges that visualization rarely contains much kinaesthetic content initially but this comes with practice (Reese 2015:291). Schilder wrote that 'the majority of subjects have enormous difficulties in imagining themselves in motion' (2000:61). But rehearsing things one might say or do in the future is a normal activity and FM merely puts a specific emphasis on the movement aspect of that; refining a movement through imagination such that more of oneself is involved in it. I remember, for example, before becoming familiar with FM and before I had

21 Feldenkrais uses the image of the ceiling coming down to floor, asking what it would touch first; nose, chest, feet? (2012:189).

22 Although, as the examples explored here show, he did use it somewhat.

undertaken any extensive performance training, my warm-up for a show which was my first professional job²³. It was very physical, with no spoken text apart from a little gibberish, and involved clowning, puppets, mask and acrobatics. It was fast and precise. After setting up and warming up, I would lie semi-supine and imagine my journey through the whole show from start to finish. I was kinaesthetically imagining all the movement, including the breathing. In retrospect I see that I had intuited that imagining action was a good way to improve, and prepare for, my performance. I used my self-image in imagined motion to prepare rather than tire myself out doing it for real, saving my energy for the show itself.

In AY 303, Feldenkrais claims there is 'a movement image, a sensory image, a feeling and thought image' (vol. 7a:2081); he is working with the movement image as a route to influence the others. Self-image is a more intimate and fundamental layer than the body. It is the image one has of oneself as one acts; the person *in* the meshwork rather than as lump of flesh and bone *on* the slab of the world.

In ATM, any part of the body, self or self-image can be the centre or focus of action and thought, but it is necessary to move through different centres in order to be liberated from stasis within oneself and adherence to social norms of thought and behaviour. It can also be seen as the work of puppetry to move consciousness to different parts of the body, to move the centre of focus or action, and also to move consciousness and the centre out of the body. Minh-ha writes, 'thought is as much a product of the eye, the finger, or the foot as it is of the brain' (261), and if thought, then also writing and creation. Her argument for the decentring and flexibility of centres of creation

²³ Playing Elise as part of a three-hander called *No Man's Land* by Peepolykus, 1994-1995.

and thought as a tenet of feminist practice fits well with the practices of FM and puppetry as understood and discussed in this thesis.

4.5 Self-image in FI

In FI, an offer is made to align self-image with physical reality, or in Gallagher's terms, to align body schema, body-image and physiology in gravity. In standing, an equal force is exerted from the earth's upthrust to that of gravity down through me, hence my whole biotensegral structure becomes a little smaller and stronger. As a practitioner working one-on-one, when I push through a supine student's bone I am looking at how clearly the movement travels through the whole person. 'Push through' is imprecise, but perhaps clearer than 'expand and lengthen into', which would more nearly describe what I aim to do. When I push through her foot I exert a much smaller force than the earth's upthrust (to say the least!), and she has a resting tonicity, and is not using any muscles to balance or hold herself up (which may be her habit); her brain is less occupied. Since her vestibular and musculoskeletal systems are calm she is freer to sense the force travelling through her skeleton, which she can begin to sense as an object, almost independent of herself. The experience is often profound and lingers once the person stands up. FM teaches the person to allow the skeleton to support her, that is, to accept that she is part of the environment, not just in it.

With more experience of FM, I am progressively able to sense whether all of myself, all of my vertebrae, and so on, are involved in a movement and I have a more accurate sense of the distribution of my 'five lines'; my limbs and abdomen when lying, and other aspects of self-image. If I can transmit force from the ground through my fourth toe to my cuboid, talus, calcaneum, tibia,

femur, pelvis, sacrum, spine, rib, sternum clavicle, humerus, ulna, hand to my student's fourth toe, the chances are the student will feel the transmission of this force throughout herself and therefore, when she stands up, she will have a precise sense of transmission from the ground to her head including the bony connection through *her* fourth toe. The sense of security she gets from her connection to the ground allows her to sense herself. So, without intervening directly in a person's thinking, and by using sensing and feeling with regards to one's own movement, through FM it becomes possible to shift the self-image, which in turn influences all movement, sensation, feeling and thought. FM uses the discrepancies in, or the faultiness of, a person's sense of self-image, or a sense of its fixity, to bring gaps in awareness to her attention. The attempt is more important than the realization. As Feldenkrais puts it, 'We confine ourselves therefore to examining the motor part of the self-image. Instinct, feeling, and thought being linked with movement, their role in the creation of the self-image reveals itself together with that of movement' (1990:12).

Haller says that Feldenkrais felt present wherever you touched him; he was omnipresent in himself, such that when Haller gave him a lesson, the way Moshe touched him back in effect gave *him* a lesson about his own organization (2010). I want to do some thinking about this loop towards puppetry. This is the heart of the matter in this thesis.

Using the skeleton accurately, without sheering forces going across it, should result in a feeling of weightlessness. There is then a conversation between ground (inanimate) and person (animate), but only one partner can actively reorganize itself. In FI, *both* partners can. In puppetry, only the puppeteer can, but the puppet is more complex than the ground; it may have articulations and issues of balance, depending on its size, method of manipulation and form. It is inanimate but has some attributes of the animate

to a greater or lesser degree; a body, joints, suppleness, responsiveness. And it is being used to portray life, or being brought to life, or animated. There are various ways of conceiving of what is happening, both from the outside and the inside. It might also be thought of as being played like a musical instrument, but the puppet itself is asked to become something (alive, a character), not just produce a sound. Something happens in the space the puppet occupies, not beyond it (as with sound from an instrument). The puppeteer, like the FM practitioner in FI, needs to find stable support through her feet and skeleton in order to communicate with another body. In FI this body is a person with a CNS; in puppetry it is a puppet with no CNS. The puppet is pure materiality. I am conceiving of 'puppet' in rather general terms here, and actual puppets clearly range from the very simple to the very complex, but in principle the same point pertains to many kinds of puppet. While FI is a joining of two nervous systems, both in relation also to the ground, puppetry is a kind of simulation of this. The puppeteer takes a part of the material world and animates it by listening to the qualities and movements that emanate from its materiality. In FI, the practitioner listens to the qualities and movements that emanate from the materiality of another person. Practising FI is a good way to train touch for puppeteers with the potential for live feedback (puppets only give mute feedback) and puppeteering is a good way to sense non-muscle-bound bodies in gravity and practise touch for FM practitioners (puppets are forgiving subjects, although it can hurt to see them maltreated or break!). Each offers the other a new perspective on touch and how one's touch impacts what one is touching. The puppet also teaches me about gravity and my understanding of counterbalance, and moving in gravity informs my puppeteering.

Haller draws on aikido and tai chi in his teaching of FM. He proposes an experience where one person stands, holding her arms out about belly height and another places his hands on hers, his thumbs on her wrists. The partners align the bones of their forearms. One offers gentle resistance to the other, who needs to find support through her skeleton such that, if the other moves away, her balance will not be compromised (2010²⁴). The exercise strikes me as an interesting one in relation to puppetry since the puppeteer is negotiating a similar area; how to maintain stability and person-image while listening to feedback from the other and maintaining the illusion of the other's person-image. Neither the FM practitioner nor the puppeteer want to become like the other; the practitioner wants to give feedback which says 'this is your skeleton, you can find support here', the puppeteer wants to use what the puppet is already doing and follow it, offering the minimal necessary support, whilst also projecting through it (story, a character). The processes are very close. The fullness of person-image in each allows for the practitioner or puppeteer to maintain her centre while acting as a conduit for what she senses from the other (person/puppet).

4.6 Feldenkrais, Nora and puppetry

The Case of Nora (1993) is unusual in Feldenkrais's writings for being a detailed case-study of a long-term FI student. It provides great insights into his ways of working. I want to look at a few examples from it that further illuminate FI and illustrate that person-image is bound up with orientation and objects in the world. This is important for my argument since it demonstrates

²⁴ A DVD set entitled *Learning Self-Organization*. Marketed as an advanced training for practitioners, it is a module that Haller teaches in the third year of his basic practitioner training.

that agency and freewill are meshworked and not solely in the domain of the subject and it enables me to make some points about puppetry and control.

Nora's loss of a coherent self-image after a stroke leads to her being unable to interact with objects in the world in a meaningful way. She is unable to put her shoes on; Feldenkrais purposely puts them with the heels facing away from her and she doesn't know what to do with them, nor which foot goes into which shoe. He writes, 'Most people would be astonished ... at the number of ways there are to be wrong ... (and) how difficult it is to slide the feet in by chance. Orientation in space and in time gives direction and adroitness to whatever we do' (1993:12). The shoes, although closely related to the body, compared to say a brick or a bucket (also related but less directly), are like strange objects to her. She knows they should go on her feet yet she is completely disoriented by them; she finds it impossible to integrate them into her self-image, or her self-image prevents her from finding a meaningful relationship with them. Likewise, she does not sit directly on a chair, but tries to 'fit herself to the chair obliquely, hoping that by dint of proximity her bottom would fit the chair' (12). And even after working with Feldenkrais for some time on left and right in her self-image, she spends ten minutes not managing to put her glasses on her face. As the mother of a toddler, I am reminded both of my daughter's interest, from a very young age, in trying to put my glasses on me, which took a while to learn, and of how, at two and a half, she was still frequently putting her shoes on the wrong feet ('Banana feet!' we would say and laugh). She started to self-correct this without prompting, possibly in response to my usual question, 'Are you comfortable like that?'. Integrating the world into one's self-image is a lengthy process and one that can be disturbed and regress. Feldenkrais notes of Nora and the glasses, that 'even the transfer from body awareness to external

objects needs training,' and 'orientation of objects relative to ourselves does not come from nowhere' (30).

When employing a puppetry approach to performance-making, I want to be able to play with this estrangement from the 'affordances' or ordinary uses of objects; I want both to develop a fuller person-image and to be able to enhance and reign in aspects of it in order to allow myself to play with all the 'ways there are to be wrong'. Hence the use of FM in theatre-making (with or without puppets) is not simply to improve performance (whatever that might mean), but also about allowing one to linger with the 'mistakes' and hear their poetry, or their novelty.

Feldenkrais writes about the process of Nora learning to read again. He wraps one hand and arm around her waist (to feel 'the slightest changes going on in her') and the other hand supports a straw she holds in her mouth with which they follow the words. (He wants to link the words seen on the page with words formed in the mouth, which are experienced earlier developmentally.) He describes what happened as 'a symbiosis of the two bodies' (45). Nora leads, although she is the one who does not know, as it were; Feldenkrais has created a situation in which she can learn. He supports her action, and when she falters and stumbles over a word, he quickly supplies it; he does not allow her to 'stiffen with anxiety' as he puts it. An argument between them will halt the learning, for example, if he goes too quickly. This symbiosis is reminiscent of that between two (or more) puppeteers working together on one puppet where disunity will lead the puppet to lose its integrity, for example, if the feet go in a different direction from the head. (A puppet whose 'body' is in a state of contradiction might of course be explored intentionally as a theme.) Usually the person on the head (and often one arm) leads - as Nora does here - and the person on the feet and/or arm(s) follows, responds and feeds back

(Feldenkrais's role) to the head operator²⁵. In FM we learn that the head, and more specifically the eyes, lead or pre-empt the movement and, knowing this, we can play with it, placing constraints on the head so it does not move and paying attention to the movement of the eyes, or moving them in the opposite direction to what might be more habitual for a given movement. (If I turn to look over my right shoulder usually my eyes and head will go first, but I can also turn my shoulders to the right and my head and eyes to the left, or just my eyes to the left.)

Juxtaposing FM and puppetry practice, neither the 'head' (Nora, or head puppeteer) nor the 'feet' (Feldenkrais, or limb puppeteer) 'lead' or follow', but act in symbiosis; herein lies the greatest potential for the puppet and it need not result in indecision or lack of clarity. Sometimes one leads, sometimes the other. The game is constantly passed between them. A distinction between the FI process and the puppeteering process is that in the second the desire might be to create conflict within the puppet, however, to do this also requires a symbiotic listening relationship between the puppeteers; they need to agree to disagree.

Craig Leo claims it is possible to arrive at a state of immanence when three puppeteers combine to produce one character, which is always different depending on the combination (*War Horse Conference*). He speaks of the importance of intention, claiming that the horse is in a sense willed to life, and the puppeteers forget their physical discomfort in the process. Three

25 My experience of multi-operator puppetry (often called Bunraku in English, after the Japanese form), has mostly been with two puppeteers where one is on the head, pelvis and arm, and the other on the feet, pelvis and arm. Unlike in Japanese Bunraku, the roles shift depending on what the puppet needs to do. For example, in a scene where a puppet was horizontal 'climbing' up a waterfall, I was on the legs and the other puppeteer on the head and outside arm. For a scene where the puppet was spun around as if on a merry-go-round, the 'head' puppeteer took control of the feet.

puppeteers combine, or relinquish their person-images to produce a self-image for the horse. The puppeteers train expanded awareness, peripheral vision and trust, playing games with layered tasks, as well as figuring out ergonomic solutions for how puppet and puppeteers mesh. Breath is important for communicating between puppeteers as well as for animating the puppet. They use yoga for stamina, flexibility and breadth; FM would also help train self-organization in relation to others (puppeteers, puppet, gravity) and 'giving the game'.

Philippe Gaulier introduced 'giving the game' early in his theatre training, very simply through the act of passing a ball²⁶. The task would be something easy - responding to some music, singing a children's song or whatever - and you could 'play the game' when you had the ball. You needed to sense when to give up the game (the ball) and pass it to 'your friend'. If the audience was enjoying what you were doing, this might mean playing with *not* giving the game. But the moment you had a sense of becoming 'boring' the ball had to fly²⁷. This is also the game of major and minor; you are in major when you have the ball and in minor when you don't.

In any theatre performance with two or more people playing together, 'le jeu' (represented by the ball) needs to be kept up in the air. My major must not propel your minor out of the game, for example by pelting you with the ball so hard that you can't catch it, unless this is a game itself. In a multi-operated puppet this is even clearer; the legs might have a major moment - for example, in a show with French puppet company A.M.K. I stomp the puppet

26 I took several workshops with Gaulier (Ecole Philippe Gaulier), 1994-5 in London; 'Le Jeu', 'Neutral Mask', 'Greek Tragedy' and 'Clown'.

27 'Your friend' and 'boring' are the specific terms I remember him using, often with fruitier language attached.

legs faster and faster in a kind of savage dance while the head puppeteer is merely keeping the upwards tension in the puppet - but this works within the context set by the other puppeteer and by the puppet itself. Afterwards the game is passed back to the head. Puppet + puppeteers function as one organism *with awareness and self-image*. Sometimes the puppet itself takes the major role, that is to say, its material qualities outplay the way it is moved; it is allowed to speak for itself. This might be at a moment where the puppeteer simply breathes through the puppet, and there is minimal manipulation, or even when the puppet pulls focus without being moved at all, when there is no puppeteer present. In Gisèle Vienne's work there are often unpuppeteered puppets or mannequins which are nevertheless expressive through their materiality, for example in *I Apologize*, where they are dramaturgically endowed with major.

The dance of roles takes place in FM too. Feldenkrais gives Nora 'the game' but gently catches it when she drops it and hands it back to her. When giving a FI lesson the game is constantly passing between me and my student; I see if she is ready to move here (catch the ball) and she responds (catches) or does not, in which case I try a different game or strategy, maybe returning to the first game later. Sometimes I give the game to her materiality; I let her rest and maybe she breathes or something settles or digests. By looking at these three processes in parallel - the play between performers, between puppeteers and puppet and between FM practitioner and student - their shared territory becomes clear and the processes can speak to each other.

From looking at Feldenkrais's work with Nora in relation to how self-image is bound up with orientation and objects in the world, I arrive at a point of identifying the play between humans and nonhumans, and between action and rest in theatrical, puppetic and FI contexts. Person-image is central to how

people act on and in, how they interact with, the world and it therefore impacts on all human activity, from puppetry to international politics, from theatrical performance to economic performance. International politics and economic performance are, to say the least, outside the scope of this thesis! But it is nevertheless worth acknowledging that these diverse fields connect back to the realm of human person-images, which are formed both individually and collectively through the expectations and interactions of parents and society with the individual as it grows.

4.7 Playing with self-image: beginnings but no endings

Nancy Galeota-Wozny is a dancer who lost her ability to see herself in the mirror as she danced. She writes about what she experienced as a loss of self-image and how FM helped reclaim an internal sense of self-image, having been reliant on the mirror for it previously. She expresses having had a fragmented, even a disappeared self. Using FM, she is able to 'envision the self-image as an elastic, dynamic process that adapts to our needs to truly see ourselves and be seen by others':

I did not so much relearn how to move, but to move in such a way that I became conscious of what was in the way of my moving. The path to three-dimensionality involved simultaneously additive and subtractive processes. I was filling myself in where I was missing and shedding habits that prevented me from moving fully. Daily practice of ATM allows me to be available to the generosity of space and together we co-create. I no longer think it's just about me expressing myself; sometimes I am expressing space. I mine space for ideas or perhaps space mines me for the same. The burden of creativity is shared and negotiated between myself and space. (Galeota-Wozny)

In puppetry, space is also occupied with others with whom one shares the burden of creativity. The mirror can also become the puppeteer's trap, so that visual feedback is preferred over felt sense, even though what the puppeteer (and dancer) sees in the mirror is not what the audience will see since the puppeteer is not usually looking towards the audience (into the mirror)²⁸.

Galeota-Wozny observes, 'you begin to move from your own authority' and this might seem problematic for the puppeteer; am I not moving from the puppet's authority? However, thinking back to Haller's exercise from tai chi, I must maintain my centre, my stability and my skeletal connection to the ground in order to puppeteer effectively. No matter how domineering the puppet or its character might be, or how much my imagination projects out and into it, our power together can only come from my (supple, dynamic, breathing) rootedness. It is this that allows me to negotiate the transformations of self-image Galeota-Wozny describes; allowing the space and the puppet(s) to express me, or me them in a meshworked flow. This is the play.

The butoh artist Hijikata²⁹ proposed, 'Taking into your own body the idea that your wrist is not your own,' suggesting, 'an important hidden secret in this concept. The basis of dance is concealed there' (Cull 114). In FM, there is an element of detachment at times, of observing the self in action, or about to be in action. What does my shoulder, or my hip, want to do? What I want, or what I do, and what it wants to do as a physical thing in gravity are not always the same. (The difference between my person-image and how I actually am.) Hijikata's idea speaks to puppetry too. (In the next chapter I look at where

28 Interestingly Schönbein, whose work I look at in Chapter 6, often uses a mirror as she develops her work, but seems to temper this experience by allowing her puppets to possess her, body and soul. The mirror is an 'étape de travail' or stage in her working process.

29 I worked with his wife, Akiko Motofuji.

Kleist's seminal text on puppetry and dance fits into this story; Hijikata's thought is close to the ideas explored by Kleist.) My hand alone (or my foot or shoulder-blade) can be a puppet. I play with whether this hand, or this puppet, is part of my person-image or not. With a puppet, there are many choices. Kaplin's scale ranges from a puppet I incorporate into my person-image (nearer to mask or body-mask, or a set of false teeth) to a puppet that dangles from strings from my hand to one I move remotely through some other device or technology. How do I choose to expand or contract my person-image? If an actor radiates into space to fill a theatre with his presence, a puppeteer focuses her person-image through the puppet, and places it precisely where she chooses (ideally).

Ingold claims that while place (a knot) was 'once a moment of rest along a path of movement, (it) has been reconfigured in modernity as a nexus within which all life, growth and activity are *contained*' (2007:96). On this basis, it is also possible to conceive of the modern self as contained. Not actively moving, from place to place or in the knot, but being transported, the person-image shrinks. Not actively moving one's attention or awareness, the person-image shrinks. Playing with it and its placement, which is done in complementary ways in FM and puppetry, helps it grow. Feldenkrais's vision was of an enworlded, meshworked, social self-image, in a constant process of creative production and nothing like a static thing. In thinking about puppetry, I want to join a move away from discourse about objects and object relations towards an idea of a meshworked flow of action where objects are seen as verbs (Jones 264, *War Horse Conference*).

Some storytelling traditions eschew endings. Feldenkrais grew up in a Hasidic community and its stories often have elusive or riddling ends, like his ATMs. A puppet's poetry often springs from its 'incompleteness', the way a few

characteristics or movement possibilities are essentialized within it, leaving it open to reconstruction by the person experiencing or watching it³⁰.

Understanding self-image involves switching between minute detail (how is my little finger involved) and the broad strokes, or function of a movement. I hope that a picture is emerging here of the intertwining and open-ended practices of puppetry and FM as potent processes of aware-ing and person-imaging. As Ingold says, 'Wherever you are, there is somewhere further you can go' (2007:170).

³⁰ As attested by Craig Leo regarding the *War Horse* puppets and puppetry; the puppets are not perfect horse-likenesses and the process of creation happens anew each performance (*War Horse Conference*).

Chapter 5

Towards training: Awareness Through Puppetry

5.1 Transition from FM to puppetry

Can you learn all you need to know about puppeteering by paying attention to how you move? For Haller, the particularity of FM is the focus on increasing sensitivity to become more aware of what you're feeling. Reese writes, 'Feldenkrais-trained means a kinesthetic depth completely divorced from technique. You can then do any damn thing with your hands and it will work because your sensitivity will be reliable' (2002:36). This minute sensing is at the heart of puppetry too, however there is no right way. Puppeteer, Iestyn Evans, says (in a very Feldenkraisian spirit),

Across theatre and film and television, I have heard of performers who believe that you can't puppeteer unless you consider the "breath" of the puppet, and other performers who believe that the concept of breath is pretentious and unnecessary. They are both wrong. People should use the techniques that they are comfortable and confident with, stay curious and open minded to other techniques, and recognize that ways of working that feel wrong and unnatural to them might be perfect for someone else.

Some skilled practitioners don't need the concept of breath; perhaps they are already using it instinctively. A set of principles may not accommodate intuition and emergent skill. You can be a satisfactory and even a very good technical puppeteer without increased awareness, but if your aim is always to improve, always to learn, then it is in this area that you can do it. Reese talks about kinaesthetic sensitivity as if it was not technique, but more like proto- or pre-technique. Puppetry is not concerned with the limits of human movement in

the way some dance forms are - it is not concerned with movement per se - but with the observation of, and sensitivity to movement in oneself and in one's materials. In this sense, FM as awareness and sensitivity-training offers a good foundation for learning puppetry.

Although I have found the pairing of FM and puppetry frequently proves problematic, particularly on a conceptual level, one dealing with animate and the other with inanimate movement, I am looking at what the two practices offer each other, and the differences between the hard and soft realities each person experiences. The meshwork is a useful metaphor for visualizing the cohabitation of different kinds of life, slow/inanimate and (relatively) fast/animate and how these are caught up together. Is a tsunami or an avalanche inanimate? Movement and speed are not the sole domain of the animate and the movement of puppets taps into the physics of moving things to give the impression of bodies animated from within (Baker, Watson).

While FM explores developmental movement like sucking, rolling and moving on all fours, children don't just play with their bodies in movement, but with the world and its objects. A rediscovery of naïve, aimless object-play can be as powerful as that of primitive movement. Where FM focuses on defamiliarizing movement in order to discover it afresh, puppetry can take this idea and apply it to the defamiliarization of objects to bring awareness to one's movement and thought-habits in relation to them. Where FM focuses on movement, a somatic approach to puppetry adds a particular focus on handling or manipulation - a specific area of movement - and applies FM principles along with puppetic attentiveness to enlarge the scope of both practices. FM and puppetry are both arts of listening or attending to. Any object exploration or performance that uses objects in a different way from that for which they were

intended is potentially an area for dishabituation - for both performer and spectator.

In the previous chapter, I began to suggest how FM can serve puppetry, but also how puppetry might serve FM and an exploration of person-image. Taking Ingold quite literally, in this chapter I investigate the opportunities for growth that emerge from following lines of the meshwork in unexpected directions. The puppeteer puppeteers the puppet, right? But what can the puppet teach the puppeteer? The practitioner guides the student in FM, right? But how can the student guide the teacher? Feldenkrais said, 'Bad teachers remain the best all their lives, and their pupils never overtake them' (*Amherst 1980, 14* 30:30). But it is also possible to move beyond the linearity implicit in the idea of overtaking; Ingold's meshwork provides a conceptual model for situations where learning is constantly looping, and where the distinctions between teachers and students are blurred. What can things teach us? Or what do they offer as guides?

Parmentier argues, 'The brain is essentially anthropomorphic and reads the world, particularly movement in the world, in terms of its own experience,' hence the puppeteer 'has need of only the barest sketch of animal or human movement for this figure to be empathically filled in as a living entity' (162). In this case, the 'experience' of the brain, which might also be called person-image, profoundly affects how it 'reads the world'. In order to enrich my reading of the world I can fill out my person-image, and I can consciously use things in the world to do this. In relation to actors, Sofia contends that, 'the pre-reflective status of the body schema's activation prevents the actor from willingly inhibiting it, so that he has to construct a rather *artificial body schema* in order to attend a higher pre-reflexive control, different from our daily pre-reflexive experience of it' (78). He claims this artificial schema is constructed

differently according to different acting traditions but usually involves deconstructing neuromotor routines and reconstructing new ones in their place, 'at a different level of control'. This could describe what happens in a FM lesson. Adding a puppet into this mix complicates matters; the artificial body schema needs not only to be constructed, but to be transposed onto, or projected into the puppet.

In his study of 'manipulacting'¹, Piris states:

Acting and puppetry entail two different forms of body schema. In acting, the body schema of the actor is characterised by his own body on stage interacting with other performers or props. In puppetry, the experience of the world of the character is evoked through the puppet and requires the puppeteer's body to experience the world in another way than the actor's body. The body schema encompasses two bodies: the actual body of the puppeteer and the apparent body of the puppet. (2012:57)

However, prior to experiencing the world in another way, the puppeteer's work relies on an intimate understanding of her own 'body schema' or person-image in order to play with this between herself and her puppet(s). Where puppeteer and puppet are co-present, Piris argues there needs to be a 'hybridization of the two forms of body schema' (2014:31). This idea lacks a sense of directionality in terms of focus and movement; person-image, or body schema, are not things but processes or becomings, therefore, in terms of the puppet, there is not so much a hybridization as choices around how to play with body schema via person-image. Piris proposes interestingly however that 'the puppet is not an Other but the image of an absent Other' (41), hinting at a play with person-image by the puppeteer. In Chapter 6 I return in greater

¹ A term first used by Annie Gilles in 1994 (Piris 2012:17).

depth and with concrete examples to his argument.

The more distinct from the performer the puppet is, the more complex the exchange of person-image. A piece of clothing or a mask might transform my person-image by calling me to inhabit it. There is an intermediate step where puppets are worn and parts of myself are 'loaned' to the puppet (my legs are the puppet's legs for instance). But many puppets are not worn, in which case to what extent can they still be considered to be incorporated into the puppeteer's person-image? Perhaps puppetry using non-worn puppets involves creating the sense that the puppets *are not* extensions of the puppeteer at all, but have independent person-images of their own. Such that my aim as a puppeteer is not only to give the impression the puppet thinks, but that it has a person-image, which is to say that *all of it* thinks; thinking is a body thing, not just a head or brain thing². My understanding of person-image as process relates more to the puppet as verb (Jones) than to Piris's fixed body schema.

5.2 Towards 'Awareness Through Puppetry'

Puppetry is an art of movement, so let's play with the idea of Awareness Through Puppetry, in the vein of Awareness Through Movement. They are very much connected. There is no puppetry without movement and no movement as we know it without things (principally a world) to push against, or move in relation to. Puppetry and FM are both involved in sensing and moving things (I could also say bodies), or moving with things, or again, suggesting movement to or giving impulses to things, inside and outside oneself, or choosing how

² In wonderful contradiction, Jones of Handspring acknowledges the thinking which 'refers to the totality of the movement the puppet makes' (266) while *War Horse* puppeteer, Tommy Luther, claims the thought process 'comes from the head' (Kohler 145).

much inner movement to send outwards. The human being is of course not a thing like another, but it is nevertheless a material entity that can be touched and moved and it shares this with things. Both puppeteers and FM practitioners learn to move bodies outside themselves such that those bodies express something they didn't before. The puppeteer starts with an inanimate body and, some would say, brings it to life. But, following Barba's idea of the actor's extra-daily balance, one might also say she simply finds some kind of extra-daily relationship with the thing; she pays it more attention than is usual with things in daily life. Barba identifies 'precarious' extra-daily balance as a characteristic 'common to actors and dancers from different cultures and times' and claims that the 'extra effort dilates the body's tensions in such a way that the performer seems to be alive even before he begins to express' (Barba and Savarese 32). The puppeteer's extra-daily attention does the same for the puppet, and, in a way, is also a question of balance; a balance of both focus and physics, as the puppeteer's centre of gravity is shifted outside herself and she throws an imaginary centre of gravity into the puppet. Depending partly on her skill, which one would hope would progressively develop but which doesn't always³, and partly on the in-built expressivity of the puppet or object, she and her viewer if she has one⁴ will be more or less bewitched or caught up in the thing's expressivity.

Something as simple as switching hands when puppeteering to use one's less habitual side can refresh one's practice. Bringing awareness to

3 An aikido-ka said to me recently that we always get better with practice. I beg to differ; it is just as easy to practise bad habits as good ones, so improvement does not always result from practice. And aikido in particular is structured to maintain the sensei's position in the hierarchy.

4 My concern in this chapter is not uniquely with puppetry as a performance mode, but more with it as a practice that brings something to the doer - whether in professional training, amateur practice, schools or medical research; see Kneebone for a collaboration between puppeteers and surgeons as an example of its non-performative applications.

asymmetrical organization for movement is a central tool in FM (Worth). Some puppeteers work ambidextrously, and these can observe differences between using their left and right sides. But even a master such as Stephen Mottram admits to not changing hands if he can help it. Perhaps he is missing out on taking his mastery to another level!

The FM practitioner starts with a responsive live human body and works through touch and/or words. (Puppeteers are not necessarily in direct physical contact with the things they animate; they might manipulate light or air⁵ to animate things and words might 'animate' a still puppet in that the animation occurs in the imagination of the audience. What the puppeteer does is part of a wider semiotic whole including lights, set, audience and so on.) The student of FM will respond partly in accordance with his person-image and how adept he is at using his attention, and partly in accordance with how well the practitioner finds a way to communicate with him (which is to say, how full the practitioner's person-image is and how adept *she* is at using her attention).

Where is my awareness as a puppeteer, or what is aware? It is not just my puppeteering hands. Puppetry is not in the hands even when these provide the interface with the puppet; the arms (and hands) have to grow out of the ground (to paraphrase Haller). The materiality of the puppet itself responds to my input; a new quality of movement is born by this exchange between puppeteer and puppet. I can include a puppet in my person-image (my knot engulfs the puppet, bringing it in to me), I can draw the line of the puppet tighter into my knot, I can extend my person-image into a puppet (I grow my lines towards the puppet), I can endow the puppet with person-image (I

5 Italian shadow puppetry company, *Gioco Vita*, often animates by moving the light sources rather than the puppets; French company, *Non Nova*, use electric fans to animate plastic bags in *L'après-midi d'un foehn* ("L'après-midi").

project a tangle for the puppet). These are not quite the same. Jean-Louis Heckel, former pedagogical head of ESNAM⁶, says that to be a good puppeteer, you need to be a good actor⁷. I understand this as meaning you need to be able to create an artificial body schema, or person-image, then inhibit it in yourself and put it in something outside yourself, and be able to play with this. You are involved, as a puppeteer, in sending movement and energy outwards, but also in receiving a response from your material.

As Evans points out (above), there are no right answers in puppetry (or FM). Whilst typically a more supple, more articulated puppet will be more expressive and possibly more receptive of a person-image with which I endow it, the expression a puppeteer might want may well come out of *her relationship with* a stiff cardboard cut-out, or some pebbles⁸. Meaning arises from the articulation of all the semiotic elements present in the performance, including the space or setting and the audience itself. While FM can help the puppeteer learn about human movement, it also prepares for thinking in gestalts and working on spontaneous action.

FM trainer, Larry Goldfarb, writes of FI in his introduction to Feldenkrais's book, *The Master Moves*:

In this work, practitioner and pupil are in touch communication. The practitioner does nothing. But it is not the "nothing" of passivity. The practitioner feels what is necessary for the pupil's learning and through the double feedback loop, pupil and practitioner, the pupil experiences a

⁶ Also formerly director of Nada Théâtre; now director of La Nef - Manufacture d'Utopies, Pantin, France.

⁷ In various conversations; it is a theme to which he returns.

⁸ I made a show once with a cast of metre rules; *Le Mètre*, 2007, La Nef - Manufacture d'Utopies, Pantin, Paris.

new pattern of possibility. Such a communication requires a synchrony, and active linking of sensory and motor processes between practitioner and pupil, what Moshe called, “dancing together”. (1984:6-7)

While this can’t be transferred directly to one-person puppeteering in that the puppet does not have a nervous system or the ability to act on its own, it relates to the work of the puppeteer in listening and responding to the material qualities and feedback from the puppet. In Chapter 2, I refer to a masterclass with master string puppeteer, Christopher Leith, where, hanging around with our puppets, we were in a similar passive listening state to that described by Goldfarb. Two or more person-puppeteering is nearer to “dancing together” in Feldenkrais’s sense since the nervous systems of two or more people are connected through the puppet. The relationship between two puppeteers and one puppet could be simplified, for example, to holding a bamboo stick between an index finger or the palm of a hand of each puppeteer⁹. Here the sense of how much each of us is ‘doing’ becomes clear and it is possible to explore a zone where neither person leads.

Although I have no experience of puppeteering giant puppets such as those of Royal de Luxe, I imagine that there is a vestige of ‘sensing’ what the other puppeteers are doing, although they must use a lot of visual feedback too (*Royal de Luxe*). Even if we are not puppeteering the same puppet, if we share a stage we are negotiating space together in a shared rhythm of performance that also involves this kind of passive but not inactive listening. Charleroi Danses' *Kiss and Cry* is a good example of this in a context which is not traditional puppetry. Hands are the dancers and miniature sets the ‘casteleets’; along with film crews, they occupy a large space together as this

⁹ This is an exercise I first came into contact with in the L.E.M. at Lecoq.

romantic tale is woven, filmed and projected live, to take on epic proportions. A hand-performer's arm is passed around a camera operator's shoulder as they create the live-filmed scene together; a dance between camera, performer and set. The whole cast and crew dance together in a sensitive choreography which is present as background breath to the cinema scale projections.

Whether the puppet-puppeteer relationship is direct, involves one or more other people or is reified in space, how does person-image come into play? In AY 496: "The face" (vol. 10b:3379-3386), Feldenkrais asks the students, with eyes closed and without the use of their hands:

In which place do you distinguish the border where the nose ends in space? ... find the transition from the nose to "not-nose"... approximately in the space around ... Begin on the face from something that is close to oneself, from inside the mouth. From inside the space of the head distinguish the nose and pay attention at which place there is no nose ... not the form of the nose, but the transition from the nose to the surrounding. Where does it stop? Where does it begin in the air? (3379)

Using the notion of going from the proximal, 'something close to oneself', to the peripheral (here the tip of the nose), Feldenkrais wants to clarify the boundary between self and not-self. This relates to the use of focus in object manipulation; to create a sense of autonomy or life in the object in my hands, I need a clear sense of where I end and it begins. Then I can play with how I direct the audience's attention. I can clearly delineate between the object and me, so that they see both and they see two, I render it so that they see the object (one), I can merge with the object so that they see one (as in body masks such as those of the Bahaus), and I can merge so that they see two

intertwined¹⁰. All are dependent on a clear sense of my boundary. However, if a thing can become part of my body schema, as I hope a puppet can so that I can use it precisely, can I also extend my sense of boundary to include a thing or material? On the one hand, I might want to do this to feel familiar and at one with my puppet, but on the other, I might want to be able to give the impression that the puppet has its own body schema and person-image, separate from me.

Being able to play with the boundary is key. Influenced by cybernetics, Feldenkrais writes:

When a group of substances gets a boundary - in our case the skin - it separates that matter from the rest of the world, and makes an outside world and me. Now, the boundary creates the situation that the outside world and myself are actually the same thing; because the piece of matter that is the boundary cannot exist by itself, it must gain means of acting, thinking, moving, sensing. And to produce activity, it must have energy, which can only come from the outside. We take air, water, food, and we reject what is useless. Now, all these things pass through the boundary; therefore individualisation means separating the world into an individual and an outside world, and the relation between that individual matter and the rest of the matter, the piece of matter in the boundary and the rest of the matter, involves continuous interchange. If that interchange ... is interfered within its continuity and its simplicity, then there is illness either in the world or in the person, or in both. (1984:36)

Feldenkrais's description of the organism recalls Ingold's meshwork; the organism is a knot of lines, trailing in and out. The concept of the person as the sum of her actions in the world is useful with regards to puppetry and a

¹⁰ Rene Baker sets an exercise playing with focus where the audience sees just the puppet, just the performer or both ("The Puppet", "Who do you see?")

puppetry approach to theatre-making. Puppetry is an art which magnifies action in the world for an audience, in the way swinging an axe magnifies the force I put into the action so that I can chop wood, and the hammer magnifies the hardness of my skeleton and provides me with a surface through which I can express this hardness without damaging my soft flesh. The puppet is a tool which magnifies action and as such it carries with it a certain level of responsibility.

Schilder was in no doubt, and Feldenkrais concurs, that 'Our relation to the earth, to gravity, is an outstanding factor for the mechanics of movement and for the perception of the body-image' (2000:174). This seems almost too obvious to state but it is the very ubiquity of gravity, as well as the human's biotensegral/biomechanical experience of it, that makes it easy to overlook. I contend that puppetry and object theatre require one to relinquish one's goals and discover how the thing one is working with moves (in gravity), what life it has, what it might say or how it might express through its muteness. This is perhaps true to an extent of all art-making involving physical materials such as paint or stone, and even to a lesser extent art-making which uses more abstract materials such as words, musical notes or computer programming. But pre-rational, aimless play with materials is fundamental to puppetry, which on a basic level involves moving with materials and discovering their movement¹¹. It is also central to FM and connects back to the developmental movement of babies as they explore and hone person-image. Without this play the puppet becomes a cliché manipulated by human hands and minds; the least interesting option when puppet can also mean bridge, go-between, connector or translator between human and nonhuman worlds. It is this potent, political,

¹¹ Baker is an important proponent of this approach in her teaching on puppetry courses and workshops internationally.

powerful and unpredictable puppet that interests me.

I propose then that FM can open up and enhance one's experience and exploration of this powerful puppet. Built into FM is the eschewing of goals, a return to the first level of exploratory or epistemic play (what does this do?)¹², where a baby discovers her body and how to move and organize it in gravity against different surfaces of resistance. What can we learn from things (including the world thing we are on/in/along)? How do things inform person-image?

5.3 Things as guides / miming the world (Jacques Lecoq)

Lecoq, my most important theatre teacher, asked us to mime the world, its objects, elements, materials and dynamics. This is how children come to know the world: 'the act of miming is an important one, an act of childhood: the child mimes the world in order to know it and to prepare him/herself to live it ... Mime is to become one with and therefore understand better' (1997:33)¹³. Mime for him is being able to play an other ('un autre'), to give the illusion of any thing ('toute chose'). We mimed, or became one with, objects, plants and animals, materials, colours, spaces, buildings, rooms, cities... in a training which brought us to know ourselves through our (re)discovery of the world. But Lecoq also saw a use for mime to heighten awareness of habit; he

12 A concept introduced to me by Baker in a workshop in 2013, Corinne Hutt identified different modes of play; epistemic play is exploratory play where knowledge of things is acquired, driven by the implicit question, 'What can this object do?', and ludic play is driven by the question, 'What can I do with this object?'. Both have a role in theatre-making, as well as games with rules. Later in this chapter I consider the use of the imagination in FM and how this is a mode of play.

13 My trans. of 'l'acte de mimer c'est un grand acte, un acte d'enfance: l'enfant mime le monde pour le reconnaître et se préparer à le vivre ... Mimer, c'est *faire corps avec* et donc comprendre mieux.'

suggests a bricklayer whose acts have become automatic through repetition will rediscover the sense, weight and volume of the brick by miming his action; 'Mime allows you to discover the thing afresh'¹⁴. This is close to the FM practices of becoming aware of what one does in an habitual movement and of refining a movement through imagining it. It is also a way of studying how the brick becomes part of one's body schema. The idea of imagining, then miming one's gestures as a puppeteer could be used in puppetry training for somatic feedback.

Hinting at this, puppeteer and FM practitioner, Nicolas Gousseff, asks, 'What do I retain of my imprint, of the way I touched something? What can my hand give when it touches something? What does my hand know? What do the imprint and the grasp know? The hand is the site of all grasping, all imprints, so it's the memory of all objects. So, do we need the objects in fact?' (Fredricksson 241). He acknowledges the way things have collaborated in the making of person-image, so that their presence persists in us. However, the presence of the object, or the embodiment of the thing is part of what nourishes its absence. Without anchorage in the thing, the mime floats, physically and semiotically. Human dexterity is the product of relationships with the things people touch. The things of technology are an extension of human dexterity, not to be mistaken as things in themselves with a force of their own (Adorno 200). To grasp this, a constant exchange between somatic awareness and thing awareness is needed. Mime in Lecoq's sense can be added to a Feldenkraisian use of the imagination in the arsenal of 'a differentiated education', to use Adorno's term.

A somatic approach to puppetry offers the opportunity to develop one's

¹⁴ My trans. of 'Mimer permet de découvrir la chose de manière plus fraîche.'

parallel sensation and observation of oneself and one's puppet; the dual focus expands on an idea already present in FM where students fill out their sense of self-image and develop the capacity to split their attention simultaneously between parts of themselves and between parts and the whole. Puppetry as a somatic technology extends this out into the world, thus lending a potentially ethical slant to it as a practice as my me-world and world-me lines of attention grow.

By assimilating ourselves to things, becoming things as puppeteers, perhaps we can learn lessons about ourselves as well as about things and what it's like to be a thing, or treated like a thing. Rather than an education which treats people like things, if students were asked to play at being things they might discover something more about themselves and their person-images in relation to each other. Total assimilation to the thing, however, is potentially dangerous. As Gross notes of Pinocchio, he easily becomes violent, smashing the cricket against the wall, using the hardness of his wooden matter against the small insect. Gross notes the view of him as 'something of a Fascist' (ch. 1), casting Fascism as involving people developing the capacity to act as if made of inert matter, with no capacity for sensing feedback from their actions. Unsurprisingly, the story of Pinocchio is often told with puppets. Puppets can take a physical battering, and give one, as seen in the Sicilian Opera dei Pupi. Blumenthal cites Jarry's *Ubu* plays where puppets 'get impaled on spikes, sliced in half, flushed down toilets, and expelled from a pig's anus' (88) and Francis delights in one of Zaloom's reasons for choosing to work with puppets; 'you can hurt them and throw them out the window and not get into trouble' (19 n.8). They are useful for allowing us to play with and speak of violence and violent acts without inflicting violence on humans. However, acts of violence with and through the puppet are *mastered* or intentional, and in this they differ

from unpremeditated acts and require as much awareness from the puppeteer as the gentlest caress. But puppets are capable of speaking of human power and agency over the material world in such a way that they offer a site for reflection on this agency and its implications.

I cannot help observing, as the mother of a two-year old, how my daughter tests the softness and (particularly) hardness in her environment by bashing and hitting things, as if testing how her own hardnesses and softnesses meet others in the world. The violent treatment puppets often get and call for seems to be related to the childish instinct to bash things; it is a way of discovering where I end and the thing or world starts, and also a way of realizing that it hurts to hit things (or people) and some things get broken if you smash them (or they hit you back). Perhaps an educational place for pretending to be things, materials, elements, animals and other nonhumans offers a chance to develop a broader sensitivity to the implications of one's actions in the world. Mime in this sense takes on an ethical value as well as having benefits for the imagination and observation of the world, the qualities it is used to develop in Lecoq's pedagogy. For the puppeteer it becomes an exercise in empathy; how do my instruments of performance 'feel' about how I treat them?

Puppets can help people recognize themselves as things, as material bodies, and in this recognition lies a fuller image of our humanity. In the same way Feldenkrais talks about completing the self-image, it is possible to think about completing the species-image, or the human-image, to include all those difficult facets that often get called 'evil'. FM offers a method for improving awareness; self-awareness, species-awareness and environment-awareness, the three being inextricably linked such that work on one will also have an effect on the others. Puppetry offers an added awareness, a specific kind of

environment-awareness pertaining particularly to how I handle things.

Puppetry as a somatic practice (Awareness Through Puppetry: ATP) holds a space between FM and puppetry, stakes out a new territory and offers a particular practice.

5.3.1 Things as guides / monomotivation and intention (Dennis Silk)

Consider the concentration in a shoe-brush. It is all wood and bristle with a task in hand... It has such dramatic talent./ It has one fixed stare. It is the *thing-stare*, the stare of the force which won't be diverted from its aim, and will explode on stage. (Silk 228)

Silk sees things not always as an end in themselves but as guides for 'personal actors', echoing Lecoq's practice of miming the world. He imagines the 'playgoer' asking 'isn't it a little frivolous, a little whimsical, to deprive the personal actor of part of his function, and to search out instead the dramatic life in a shoelace, a bicycle pump, a hair dryer?' but categorically states:

The playgoer is wrong. It's because the personal actor has lost the thing in himself, the strong concentrated thing, that we turn to a theater of the thing¹⁵. He's squandered his strength in a hundred personal emotions which he then inflicts on his role. But the thing-actor has guarded its strength. It's a form of locked up energy... The personal actor should be locked up in a furniture warehouse an entire week and study the concentrated life in a chair, a table, a commode - the unhurried life. (228)

Silk is interested in the monomotivation of the thing. It is an extreme and perhaps only partially convincing proposition (more of a provocation?). Gross

¹⁵ Lecoq also said, during my training, that mime, or silence, resurged when there was a crisis in theatre and it needed renewing.

observes that Silk's thinking is part of a tradition of writers who latch onto the puppet to help them think about theatre, including Kleist, Shaw, Craig, Brecht, Ghelderode, Lorca and Artaud (ch. 2). He identifies the power of thing-ness 'to show us something of the mechanical side of human life itself, and how it conditions the movements of its manipulator. Each depends on the other' (ch. 5). Gross also muses on the expressive capacity of things; 'I am always drawn to the idea of life in nonliving things, the sense of animation in what appears inanimate ... There is a moment when this lifeless object seems not just moved but self-moving, a thing with a soul, a need, a desire, a power of sensation, an intent of its own' (Coda). He could be describing the moment the object becomes a puppet and, ironically, it is not that it appears manipulated, as the everyday use of the word 'puppet' or expression 'puppet-like' might suggest, but precisely that it appears to be alive and self-moving, as if possessed of a person-image.

Similarly, in a person's movement, when she appears to move in harmony with her need, desire or intention, she appears to stand taller in gravity and no longer to be dragged down or moulded by the outside world. There is a sense of physical life, where physical means obeying the laws of physics, emanating from the person as she takes her appropriate space and stature in the world. A very tall man no longer stoops to bring himself down to the level of other people; a violinist's posture no longer retains the shadow of her instrument; an office worker no longer has a chest caved in from sitting hunched over a computer. The capacity to swing between sensing oneself as a flesh and bone object in gravity as well as a person acting in the world is essential in FM and is a useful emphasis when using the method with puppetry. Complete person-image aligns with physical reality.

Things too can swing between their thingness and their aliveness; articulating this swinging is the art of puppetry. Silk imagines 'Thing Theater' where 'things are granted a higher dramatic status than in the theatre of the personal actor' (228). He goes beyond Lecoq:

A real acting school would have classes where personal actor and shoe brush study together. The personal actor would imitate the mask-like force of the shoe brush, the shoe brush the attack and variety of the personal actor. And a real theater would oscillate between a vivid personal life and a massive thing life. Health, in the theater as in life, concedes these two extremes. (229)

Gross echoes the sense that observation of thing life has a lot to offer:

To find this life in objects returns us to life, to the experience of life arriving from inside us and outside us, in all of its surprise, its energy of conflict. The thought of life has to do with how things survive. The idea of life in the object is also something fought over. We wrestle with an unsuspected form of life as with an angel, as if to steal from the object a blessing, to receive a new name even as we rename the object. (Coda)

There is an echo of the Feldenkraisian non-habitual here. In *The Potent Self*, Feldenkrais, partly in reaction to a psychoanalytical view of cross-motivation (which, however, he demonstrates is unnecessary in order to understand or overcome it), aims to show why monomotivation is desirable for a person and how to achieve it. In his talk, *On Awareness* (1971), he gives the example of the impossibility of solving an equation when angry. A clear parallel can be seen between Silk's analysis of the 'monomotivated' brush, at one with its function, and Feldenkrais's monomotivated human, whose intention is expressed precisely in her action. Feldenkrais writes:

The ideal conscious action corresponds to a clearly recognized unique motivation. The conscious act is *monomotivated*, and the skill of acting consists in acquiring the ability of inhibiting and excluding all the parasitic elements that tend *to enact themselves* by habit, conditioning, and stereotyped motion. Most of the time we fail to achieve what we want by enacting more than we are aware of, rather than by missing what is essential. (2002:20) (His italics.)

He is inciting us to become one with the function we wish to perform, which, in Silk's universe, is to be thing-like. Feldenkrais asks us to become minutely aware of a shoulder-blade, a finger, a foot and so on, oscillating back and forth to a sense of one's whole self during rests in the lesson and at the end when we reintegrate into the world of moving vertical bipeds involved in society, with a refreshed person-image.

Silk's muster of theatrical players includes 'the personal actor, the thing-actor, the mask' (a fractional puppet) as well as the puppet and 'parts of the human body, a finger or a toe for instance, when considered in detachment from the parent body' when they 'become things in their own right' (229), or, as Jurkowski sees it, with a slightly different accent, 'the hand as material' (2000:63). I would argue that FM facilitates an exploration of these 'finger-or-toe-thing(s)' as well as an exploration of a person's intimate interaction with them, and that this can also be extrapolated outwards, so that it facilitates the exploration of thing-things, mask-things and puppet-things, to use Silk's terminology. Silk identifies a fear of animism: 'We're afraid of the life we're meager enough to term inanimate. Meager because we can't cope with those witnesses' (240)¹⁶. The me-as-thingness aspect of FM opens up the possibility

¹⁶ He is echoed by Schumann; 'We who think of ourselves as subjects don't even know don-keys well enough, not to speak of fence posts and rocks, to which we assign the job of object, because we haven't discovered their individuality yet' (48).

to approach animism from within, where the human is part of the material world and can sense and imagine herself as concrete object, material, or inanimate thing. Transformation of the person-image comes about partly through developing sensitivity to my skeletal, thingy self in movement.

Silk seems to imagine that the thing too can 'learn', although its learning is presumably tied up with the actor, who learns to bring out more of its potential, or invent more ways of playing with and through it. But doesn't the thing too have habits? A mug has a handle by which it has frequently been held, a chair invites me to sit where it is worn from all those sitters, a book's thumbed pages ask to be opened where the spine is already cracked, a staircase shows me where to tread from the wear on its carpet. Not quite Gibsonian affordances, these qualities are more like the object-images of these objects; they are the ways they have already been used which have marked them. But, approached in non-habitual ways, these things are openings to other worlds, other imaginaries. Where else can I put my hands? How does it want to move? How else could I sit on or hold it to give it a rest from its habit or a new experience? How does it + me enlarge its existence? What is the specific story it has to tell now within the cumulative one that it wears? These are the kinds of questions I have in my mind as an FM practitioner in FI (replacing it with him/her) but also as a puppeteer.

Chairs, for example, have a long history of metamorphosis in contemporary theatre, from Kantor to Complicité, to name only two of the most famous non-habitual chair-users in theatre¹⁷. In a show called *Rose* by French puppet company A.M.K., based on Gertrude Stein's *The World is Round*, we puppeteered an articulated chair which referred to Rose, the main

¹⁷ Eleanor Margolies devotes a chapter to chairs in her PhD thesis and writes about both Complicite and Kantor in depth.

character, in an episode in her imagination. The chair was a jointed version of one she had in her nursery room, suggested in our setting for the staging (fig. 7). The anatomy of the chair, even before it is deconstructed and articulated, clearly speaks of the human body. Is it only objects that refer to the human body, tools or human-made things that have 'habits' or habitual and non-habitual ways of using them? A leaf or a rock also has 'habits'; what it normally does without interference. Watson's *Ephemeral Animation* project (from 2009) was inspired in part by Silk (Watson 2012) and sought to capture the secret lives of things. Puppetry, or object theatre, is about finding the non-habitual lives of things (endowing them with self-image, or a history), and FM about exploring the non-habitual in human movement. There is common ground.



Fig. 7 Krystin Fredricksson and David Lippe puppeteering an articulated chair in *Rose*, Cie A.M.K., 2005. Image © Cécile Fraysse.

Puppetry and FM accept that there is a way the thing or body wants to move which is dependent on physics. FM explores the expressiveness or variations accessible to a person within the bounds of what is functional and non-destructive. With things and materials there is also the option to go beyond this, for example a paper puppet might be burnt or an ice puppet might melt¹⁸; the thing is no longer, it can be destroyed, it can 'die'. But a new piece of paper can remake the lost thing. With a human being this destruction means death. This is blindingly obvious. Yet the misused energy in the system, that leads to sheering forces that work against the skeleton and lead to the slow destruction of the organism, is accepted by many as normal ageing. I can't help thinking of the Monty Python chocolate box sketch in which the surprise selection includes a 'lightly killed' frog covered in glucose ("Monty Python")! It is as if lightly killing ourselves to achieve certain ends is alright. Returning to Silk, perhaps things can learn variation, expression and the non-habitual from people, and people from things, the need to remain within certain physical limits in order to survive and thrive.

Learning must maintain, however, a sense of lightness and not too much concentration, a quality that Feldenkrais was keen to keep at bay. Gross expresses how 'idle movement' brings things to life:

Suddenly a thing you hold, that lies useless or useful in front of you, seems to have a face, a will of its own. Without hands, it gestures; footless, it takes a stance; silent, it cries, a word, a murmur, a shriek, a mockery, a warning, a consolation. The life is often hidden in plain sight, waiting patiently to be recognized, emerging in the most idle movements, provoked by setting one object beside another, by an idle glance or touch. (Coda)

¹⁸ For example, in Yves Joly's 1949 show, *Tragédie de Papier*, a paper puppet is cut up and burnt (Jurkowski 2000:63), and in Emilie Valentin's 1996 show, *Un Cid*, puppets sculpted in ice melt ("Un Cid.").

Person-image and the fictional self-image of a thing need to be given a space in which to emerge; they cannot be forced or willed.

Silk was interested in the movement in things, not just in things themselves. He gives us images of the twofold lives of the pendulum ('there, and back') and the flag ('folded back on itself, then declaring itself for movement') (239). I am reminded of one of Lecoq's twenty movements, the 'éclosion', which starts folded in on oneself to expand out and then return (fig. 8). The emphasis is on the impulse which begins the movement in either direction, which should be definite but not explosive or sudden, followed by a growing or closing, like a flower opening or closing, captured by time-lapse film. The rhythm is the *jo-ha-kyu* of Japanese theatre and other arts¹⁹, explained by Pradier thus:

The first phase is determined by the opposition between one force which is increasing and another force which is resisting the development of the first (*jo* 'to restrain'); the second phase (*ha* 'to break', 'to interrupt') is the moment when the resisting force is overcome until one arrives at the third phase (*kyu* 'speed'), when the action culminates, release all its power and suddenly stops as if meeting an obstacle, a new resistance' (Barba and Saverese 243-4).

¹⁹ I say this from my experience of working with Noh performer, Shiro Daimon, and Kabuki actor, Morohiko Hanayagi in a three-week workshop in 2000, as well as from working with Yoshi Oida in a short workshop in 1992.

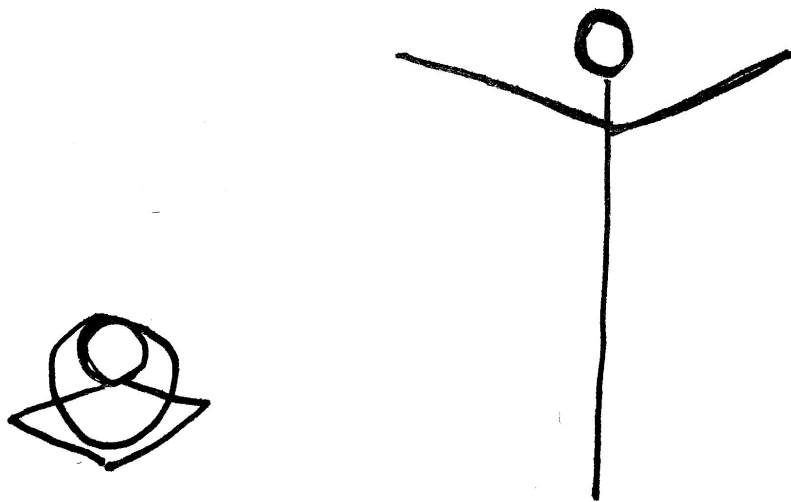


Fig. 8 My rendition of Lecoq's schematic drawing of the 'éclosion' (1997:83).

Silk frames objects, as they are used, or played, and stored, in this 'folding and unfolding life' (239). In seeming contradiction with this, Jurkowski quotes mime, Ladislav Fialka, who says, 'The puppet can't perform fluid movements, it can only convincingly perform the beginning and end of a movement, the puppet's movement develops from one phase to the next, from one pose to the next, from one gesture to the next. What happens during this time is of no importance to the puppet' (2000:54). However, this seems to suggest that the puppet takes care of the movement in between 'poses' simply and on its own, as in Silk's folding and unfolding. Since the thing requires an agent from the outside to move it, it teaches very clearly about beginning and ending a movement, a narrative, or a moment (a mini-narrative). This clarity of action (and inaction) is surely something Silk had in mind when he claimed a place for things as teachers.

Opening and closing, folding and unfolding, are fundamental movements in nature; in flowers, in joints, in eyes. Moshe Pinchas Feldenkrais was named after a famous ancestor in his Hasidic lineage, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz. Kaetz investigates how aspects of the method were seeded in Feldenkrais's Hasidic roots. Without offering further analysis, he gives an example where his and Pinchas' thinking overlap:

Explaining the Kabbalistic principles of "direct light" (expansion) and "reflected light" (contraction), Pinchas taught: "If you drop your hand, this is according to the principle of expansion. If you lift your hand, this is according to the principle of contraction". (64)

A key aim of FM is to reduce co-contraction of the antagonist muscles which must work together in a coordinated way to create movement through extension and contraction, rather than against each other, dampening the movement. In *The Potent Self* (1985), Feldenkrais asks the reader to turn her hand palm up, then palm down, and notice that when it is turned up the fingers tend to bend, and when down they tend to straighten. Feldenkrais remarks, 'So though you were only required to turn your hand, you were in fact enacting something more in addition, namely the bending and straightening of your fingers' (15). He goes on to explain the reason as being 'that we "habitually" straighten our fingers when the palm is turned downward while taking hold of objects or grasping things. In the other position the hand is clenched most of the time, and the fingers bent, as when bringing an object toward ourselves to look at, smell, eat, or listen to' (16). Feldenkrais is interested in this because it demonstrates that even a simple action is rarely monomotivated; if the hand were a thing not attached to a human but with the same physical properties, it would behave differently when turned in gravity. Both Feldenkrais and Pinchas give a sense of flow between self and world through movement; expansion is

'direct light' or the act of reaching outwards to grasp the world and contraction is 'reflected light' or bringing the world towards ourselves. Reese quotes Moshe in his early book on jiu-jitsu saying 'The *torah* (law) of letting go and contracting is very important ... both the contraction of muscles, and their soft letting go' (2015:105).

Returning to Silk and his plea for things as guides; people as doers (with habits) lack the freedom of monomotivated things to be. But is the folding and unfolding of the thing (the flag) simpler than that of the hand? Yes and no. A creature self-moves from within and tends to resist external influences. The flag is subject to the wind. If I animate the flag, I can make it look as though the wind is moving it, or as if it is moving itself from an inner impulse. Silk's idea seems to have been that the passive thingness of the thing should not be ignored; on its own it does not do more than the wind does to it.

The thing or puppet can expand outwards towards an audience when endowed with self-image, and contract back down to its thingness. The puppeteer can let go, or expand into the puppet, which becomes part of the puppeteer's person-image and now includes the extremities of this new physical form, and contract back towards herself, bringing the puppet back to its status as thing. She can endow it, or part of herself, with a separate self-image so what is enacted is more like a dialogue. The puppet/thing can help to teach monomotivated action if the puppeteer respects its thingness and gives into it. A dissonance might be sought with the material form; a dialogue between union and separation might be desired as seen in the work of Schönbein or Moussoux-Bonté ("Twin Houses"), for instance.

A puppet needs an intention; a puppet needs to be seen to think²⁰ if it is to be seen as more than a thing, to be credited with life, with a consciousness of some kind (given that the audience knows it is a puppet and their perception will circulate between believing in the puppet and noticing/not noticing the puppeteers if they are visible). If the puppet isn't given an intention, it is just moving, no matter how beautifully, and the effect will be merely aesthetic. The indirect means of manipulation of string puppets makes it difficult to give them a sense of intention, hence they often seem more purely aesthetic and less potentially dramatic than other kinds of puppet. Feldenkrais quotes 10th century Egyptian sage Sa'adia Gaon: 'He who prays without an intention in his heart, his prayer is not heard' (Kaetz 41). Clarifying your action leads to the ability to enact your intention. The key to clarifying your action is clarifying your person-image.

5.3.2 Things as guides / perfection, awareness, readiness (Kleist)

Take the word butterfly. To use this word it is not necessary to make the voice weigh less than an ounce or equip it with small dusty wings ...
Never act out words. Never try to leave the floor when you talk about flying.

Leonard Cohen (Cohen 160)

These words remind me of Kleist's *On the Marionette Theatre*. So far, I have avoided tackling Kleist, puppet theory's most obvious and much-discussed point of reference regarding, arguably, things as guides. His essay has received many interpretations; Jurkowski describes Kleist's romantic

²⁰ Alain Recoing talked about life of the puppet being reliant on it seeming to think, rather than move.

understanding of the puppet as actor (1988:8) and Cixoux, de Man, Lemahieu, Nelson, Ray, Ridout and Ruprecht have all fed into my reading of Kleist but I will not rehash theirs here.

The essay hangs around a conversation. This in itself is pertinent; FM functions through verbal and tactile dialogue, the Hasidic tradition Feldenkrais hails from is dialogic, puppetry is at least a dialogue and sometimes involves more than two. Nelson points out Kleist's dialogue is more Asclepian than Socratic; the interlocutors are not equals (61), which might also be said of puppetry and FI. However, progress is only made *through* the dialogue, so, in a sense, this is irrelevant. Kleist articulates ideas around puppetry, performance and control; he does not present an argument.

Mr. C., a principal dancer, considers dancers can learn from marionettes. Kleist's narrator asks him how it is possible for the marionettes to be controlled so well. Mr. C. observes that if the puppeteer places his centre of gravity in the puppet, the puppet's limbs will fly like pendulums with perfect grace and a lack of affectation impossible for a human. This happens because of the nature of the articulations. In other words, it is a constrained system like the one involving the skeleton as Berthoz describes it (143-4); the structure of the skeleton constrains human movement and the structure of the puppet constrains its movement²¹. A proximal movement on the part of the puppeteer transfers to the proximal part of the puppet whose limbs swing in the only way they can. Part of the nature of a good puppet is that it will allow the movement

21 Jones recounts the process of making the *War Horse* puppets, 'Adrian (Kohler) had to decide which horse-like actions he would be able to include in the puppet's structure and which not. A thorough knowledge of the physical skeleton was necessary in order to be able to simplify the jointing and design a workable puppet. This was a process that required a deep intuitive understanding of the mechanical capabilities and ergonomics of the human hand and body and how the six hands of three puppeteers could be used to give the horse as much physical articulation as possible' (258).

you want to happen, and prevent 'wrong' movements, like a knee turning inside out.

Nelson finds Mr. C's reasoning 'kinetically fantastic' (62). It is comically complex and inconsistent, including accurate and erroneous elements. Kleist creates movement around ideas rather than making any attempt to make one party right. Mr. C. remarks that you could replace the puppeteer with a motor and the movement would be even more perfect. Mottram sometimes does just this, building the movement he wants into the mechanism. He claims that the audience does not notice the difference. He, however, does, and feels like a fraud²². This speaks to Ridout's reading of Kleist since it points to something faltering about theatre. Even when Mottram knows a motor could do a better job than him at manipulating, and it would be easier, he feels a fraud if he is not on stage actually doing it, perhaps sensing that the movement produced by a motor might not appear authentic and the sense of liveness might be lost. (He does sometimes use motors so that he can move something else at the same time.) Maybe he also feels a fraud if he is not actually doing the work his audience has paid to see, as Ridout might highlight. The experience of the performer is an important part of the theatre transaction. In puppetry, I would argue this is the experience of person-image play, which I need not engage in if I use a motorized puppet.

Cohen asks, 'What is the expression which the age demands?' and answers, 'The age demands no expression whatsoever... Speak the words, convey the data, step aside' (2001:161), echoing Mr. C., who states that dancers could learn from the simple, gravity-governed, psychology-free movement of marionettes:

²² Conversation in a workshop, 2014.

a puppet does not give itself airs and graces. Affectation appears ...
when the soul is elsewhere than the centre of gravity of a movement ...
Look at young F ... his entire soul (a dreadful sight!) is lodged in his
elbow. (Kleist 123)

This could be a description of an incomplete person-image; if the dancer involved the whole of himself in every movement and had perfectly diffused awareness, the spectator's attention would not be drawn to his elbow. Mr. C. seems to suggest then that dancers should align their person-images with physical reality.

There are two other anecdotes in the piece. The narrator tells of a young man who experiences a moment of self-consciousness under another's gaze and loses his youthful grace; the theme of person-image is not present only in the dancer's observations about the puppets. The young man stares at his mirror image as he repeatedly attempts, and fails, to recover his own beauty while watched by the narrator and another witness. He is striving to rediscover an image of perfection he saw himself as having, fleetingly. Ruprecht argues that it is not his self-consciousness that prevents him from finding grace however, but shame and embarrassment; 'Shame and coyness are closely connected to the failure of fulfilling the criteria of an ideal self – and an ideal body' (2006:41). Interestingly in relation to FM, she points out that 'the attempt to repeat a specific posture' or 'goal-oriented movement, in Kleist, leads to falling out of balance' (47). In FM each movement is a fresh opportunity for discovery; mindless repetition or striving to achieve a specific end are counter-productive.

At another turn in the text, Mr. C. claims the wearers of prosthetic limbs move with 'composure, lightness, and grace' (123) as if aided by integrating a non-human element into their person-images, just as the puppet allows the

puppeteer-performer to find grace in a way which the dancers cannot, remaining 'affected'. Ruprecht refers to Kleist's 'bewildering praise of the prosthesis' which she claims points up that 'flawless perfection cannot be separated from fragmentation and lifelessness' (2006:36). However, I would argue that the integration of a thing into person-image, which also has its parallel in FM in the relationship with the floor and the skeleton, is presented by Kleist as offering a pathway to awareness rather than perfection. Given the capacity of person-image to integrate things, it is wise to be measured about what prosthetics might signify. Sobchak recounts her experience of her prosthetic leg and feels 'fully human'; the leg is incorporated *as* (not into) herself (279, 283). She describes herself as 'physically more present to myself' since having to relearn how to walk with the leg; 'I have discovered my center of gravity' (289). Fragmentation and lifelessness are not definitive states, but phases or processes. Person-image integrates and disentangles from things; it is this capacity that is fascinating, making humans truly meshworked creatures. The Feldenkraisian and puppetic focus on a meshworked person-image or being in and with concrete reality works against the debilitating shame experienced by the young man and the affectation of the dancer.

Feldenkrais's concept of potency includes the ability to act from one's organic needs rather than bowing to societal expectations. The 'ideal' in an ATM or FI is in the practitioner's mind only as a guide which she knows is unattainable; the point is not the end (hence there is no model) but the process of and learning that occurs. Perfection is by definition a fleeting moment in an ongoing process of growth. In this way frustration at not

succeeding is (theoretically) avoided since there is no goal²³. Most theatre experience is mediated; an FM experience is not. In FI there is a direct connection between the skeleton and CNS of the practitioner and her student, and in ATM the student's focus is within herself and on herself in her environment. Given this difference, what work can FM do for performance beyond limber bodies, improved coordination and extended range of motion? What do these qualities even have to do with theatre?

In the final section of the essay Mr. C. recounts fencing a bear and being utterly unable to touch it since it parries all his thrusts and recognizes all his feints. The dialogue ends with this exchange (Mr. C. speaks first):

'...We see in the organic world that the more the powers of thought become dark and feeble, the more grace shines majestically through.

... grace returns after understanding has passed through infinity. It thus appears in those human forms which either have no consciousness at all, or have an infinite one: in the marionette and in the god.'

'So therefore', I said in some confusion, 'we should eat once more of the Tree of Knowledge in order to return to innocence?'

'Certainly', he answered. 'And that is the last chapter of the history of the world'. (125)

So, rather than being about the dancer mimicking the marionette's graceful movement, the overall gist is concerned with the human moving beyond being governed by self-consciousness and ego, so it can master falling, the Fall being done and dusted (Ruprecht). Mr. C.'s need to defeat the bear means that his

²³ Many ATMs do seem to have a goal, at least in terms of an ideal movement, some of which are deemed impossible; the point in these being observation of frustration within oneself. ATM is goalless in that the movement in the lesson is only a means to greater awareness, not an end in itself.

observation does not match his opponent's; the bear's composure is mentioned several times. He looks Mr. C. right in the eyes. The bear is like a master martial artist; his movements are easy and swift and he only responds to true thrusts, not to feints. Ruprecht suggests the bear wins because 'he possesses visual power' (2006:46), but I disagree. Spontaneous action entails more than just vision; it demands awareness.

The bear reads Mr. C.'s intention perfectly. 'Eating of the Tree of Knowledge' here seems to concern movement awareness (the puppet), maturity (the young man) and spontaneity, or the ability to move in any direction at any moment (the bear); three elements central to FM. While puppetry is certainly a technical art (some things are necessary for it to 'work'), there is also scope for both the professional and student puppeteer and for anyone using puppets in another context (therapeutic, educational...) to explore how movement awareness, maturity and spontaneity are brought into play in a specific way through the exploration of one's relationship with matter and materials. How is person-image inflected by materiality and being in the world?

Kleist moves through his themes in an order which reflects my experience with, and growing understanding of, Feldenkrais's work. At first, FM seemed to be about movement and learning to move better. On some level it is, but only as a route towards awareness (through movement). In the practitioner training we pored over the skeleton-object²⁴ to understand how it functions as a structure, where it can move if free from the flesh and brain/CNS of a person. How can I best find support from my skeleton for movement? Human skeletons are not identical, but even given endogenous and

²⁴ I use this term when I mean a skeleton that I can touch and hold outside my own body, and not my skeleton or that of another person.

exogenous variations, there is a basic structure and function which is universal. Looking at, touching, and imagining the skeleton-object in movement supplements the experiential-somatic processes of ATM (sensing my own skeleton) and the somatic-analytical and experiential processes of FI (sensing my skeleton in relation to someone else's and finding out how to communicate with her). Mr. C. sees the puppets in movement and sees the freedom of their limbs to respond to the distal (in relation to the puppet) impulse of the puppeteer. Apprehending the skeleton-object affords a sense of the weight and bulk of different parts, a sense of articular connections and the potential play available in different joints, a sense of the different functions of bones within the skeleton. In very broad summary, the ribs, spine and skull protect, the pelvis holds like a bowl, the pelvis and spine transmit force, the leg bones support and the arm bones are available to fulfil many functions relating to the person and the outside world. Using the skeleton-object to understand human functioning is a little like Kleist's dancer observing the puppets; both attempt to apprehend the structural underpinnings of movement²⁵.

In a similar vein to Mr. C., Fialka gives a sophisticated take on the idea of the puppet's capacity for grace; 'The puppet performs the form of the movement; it is guided towards doing it and not towards how it is done. The live person expresses the tension of a movement more than the movement itself' (Jurkowski 2000:54). Obrastsov similarly observes, 'No actor is able to create the representation of a generalised human being, because he himself is an individual. Only the puppet can do this, because it is not a human being' (Jurkowski 1988:24). Cixous thinks 'Kleist questions the limits of the human

25 In Handspring's work, moving the centre of control from the chest, inherited from European rod puppetry, to the pelvis is identified as giving 'a sense of African movement' (Sichel 163). This clearly relates to Schilder's socially formed body-image, and there is a discussion to be had about how this impacts on movement as present in performance.

body' (37) in its lightness, even though it is held up by threads. She claims:

the puppet does not really dance. To dance is already to want to dance. The puppet is simply in harmony with external constraints. Humans can never get there except in brief moments, in hundredths of a second and quite exceptionally. We live the tensing of our muscles as spontaneous. Slaves to the spirit that keeps us upright, we are struggling against external constraints. (37)

Hers is not a meshworked view of the human or the puppet where the dance is *between* the elements. I am interested in what we get out of the experience of communing with the material world collaboratively, rather than struggling against it. This is the gap that puppetry coupled with a somatic practice like FM aims to move into: Awareness Through Puppetry.

FM is about extending experience, revealing options, proposing new worlds, and theatre is too, especially puppet theatre which proposes impossible worlds. Kleist's bear seems capable of perfect spontaneous action, something it has been trained to do for the purposes of entertainment, suggests Ridout. But one wonders how it has been thus trained, and as Ridout points out, the narrator's response to Mr. C's question as to whether he believes this story amounts to this; a likely tale. It is hinted that this model of perfect spontaneous action (in a bear, no less) is unattainable. So, far from advocating puppets over actors, Kleist riffs on the human relationship with matter and on human behaviour and how experiments in this area are doomed to failure but attempts are nonetheless worth the bother. Things are guides but the process of learning has no end in sight. It is in this openness that a somatic approach to puppetry has a particularly rich offering to make; education should not be about learning things but about learning how to learn (Feldenkrais 1980).

5.4 Skeletons as guides

I want to backtrack a little. In FM, I construct a sense of the person-image of my students through what I see and, in FI, what I feel and see, and I aim to create the conditions for the student to refine her image through her own attention. I think about the skeleton and how it would move if tonus was equally distributed throughout the person. This clearly connects to Kleist's thinking and I initially related this to my experience in puppetry, both in the context of making joints which allow movement and expression, and in terms of puppeteering, sensing whether I allowed the puppet to take its space and managed not to inhibit its inbuilt movement tendencies. When I first tried to bring puppetry and FM into closer dialogue my instinct was to think about the skeleton as an inner object or puppet. This proved problematic and limiting, however, as it denies the complexity of FM, and of human functioning, eclipsing it as a meshwork involving movement, function and person-image, which is where it gets its radical politico-ecological potential.

Feldenkrais noted that, 'Some would say ... that we do not 'have' a skeleton, muscles, glands, nervous system etc. They would say, and I agree, that we 'are' all those things' (1981:71). As referenced in the Chapter 1, he said 'your skeleton will survive your soul' and intended to write a book about skeleton consciousness. However, this should not be misunderstood as inner feeling. You can only feel your skeleton through something else and through the activity you are doing; you can feel your sit bones because you are sitting (the activity) on a chair (the environment). Hence, FI is a process which provides very specific and subtle feedback to a person about her skeleton, and ATM is a process which enables a person to get feedback from the environment about her skeleton (mostly from the surface she is touching and her ability to find support from it for her movement). Ultimately, I chose to frame this

research in relation to person-image, towards which skeletal awareness contributes, as it offers a richer conceptual connection between FM and puppetry.

As in FM, with the puppet I am interested more in the exchange than whatever movement is produced; what the doing of it gives to me, to my being, to my person-image. How is my person-image constructed through the precision of my skeletal contact with the environment and how this is affected when I operate a puppet? How do I develop my inner movement and to what degree do I and can I choose to send this outwards? My focus shifted towards the interface, the exchange between the puppet or person and me, rather than the idea of moving the skeleton as an inner puppet, although this concept did some theoretical work for me. In particular it helped towards a materialist stance but also revealed that I might be left making positivistic and reductionist statements that I didn't intend. Wendy Wheeler enlists Raymond Williams' help to create 'a materialist, but non-positivistic and non-reductionist, account of evolutionary cultural change' (15), emphasizing, 'Human and natural biology are palpably not human constructs, either mastered or made,' but 'they are powerfully semiotic' (17). I am concerned with movement in the physical world, and with the physical laws of movement, but not divorced from what they mean. While human bodies cannot be seen purely as human constructs, and do have an underlying physical-biological reality, puppets *are* human constructs, and although they can be seen as texts to be read or performed, their concrete reality gives them a special status; they are unique things in the world with bodies in the way beings are and texts are not quite. (The case could be made for text as concrete entity, as body, but it would be hard to argue that one might perceive a text as a body, or mistake a text for a living being.)

Jones, of Handspring, claims that 'puppetry in design and performance is a form of authorship' explaining, 'The jointing (or lack of it) and the structure of the puppet allow for certain forms of expressiveness and not others' which creates a 'semiotic grammar' (253, 254, 258). The puppeteer meanwhile:

is literally engaged in a parallel, low-key drama: a life or death struggle, dependent on the puppeteer's strength, stamina, muscle memory and, of course, artistry or talent. This is a drama that has nothing to do with the script written by the author, and it must be enacted by the puppeteer, whether or not the director is interested in it or even conscious of it. (254)

The puppet, then, can be seen as a text in the form of a body. Where there is a body, there is the potential for a body-image. Structure influences movement but a puppet, or person, must still be moved or move; this is where person-image as play or the interpretation of structure comes in.

The skeleton as focus was also problematic since there are ways that it is very unobject-like in life, even though it is the object we become in death. You can amputate my arm or leg and I can see it as a thing separate from me; you can transplant my heart such that I can hold and touch the heart I was born with (is it still my heart, or just a lump of flesh? Isn't the thing that beats in me and keeps me alive *my* heart, wherever it comes from?) but you cannot remove my whole skeleton, although you can give me artificial limbs or transplant my bone marrow or give me a blood transfusion. (Blood is made in the bones; flow and structure are of the same source.) My skeleton is the fundamental object at my core and indissociable from me as I live. It is both structure and organ. I can lose pieces of it but not the whole thing; a body without a skeleton is meat in a way that even a decerebrated body is not, it is

still recognizably a body. (A puppet, however, can take any size, shape or form.)

I have not so far referred to the work of Tufnell and Crickmay who make and write on creative processes involving movement and materials in evocative ways informed by somatic practice; they invoke touch, boundary and bones. They suggest, for example, imagining 'you have no bones' as a prelude to replacing the bones 'slowly... one by one' (2004:195). They include a radiograph of a newborn's arm showing that the bones do not touch, as emphasized in Levin's biotensegrity model, quoting D'Arcy Thompson alongside it: 'the whole skeleton ... is related in form and in position to the lines of force, to the resistance it has to encounter ... resistance begets resistance, and where pressure falls there growth springs up in strength to meet it' (197). The way the skeleton is used produces the resistance and support it offers both in its form and in its structure. It is guide and guided. It grows in response to action and is used to act in ways governed by my person-image. Tufnell and Crickmay's work offers fascinating forays related to my research, however, I have chosen to maintain a focus more directly on puppetry and person-image, rather than on their broader terrain of creative process and environmental art. I will not address their work further here.

Fine Art training has traditionally involved a study of the human figure and anatomy, previously from cadavers and more recently through life drawing or modelling. If puppetry is a study of movement, of animation, then training in it should have a coherent and precise way of studying human movement at its centre, even though its aim is not necessarily to recreate human movement in a puppet. I propose that FM is particularly suited to the puppeteer's needs since it addresses global movements (functions) through experiential discovery. It is very concrete; it is not about 'energy', a rather vague word

used in many physical theatre trainings and martial arts deployed for this purpose. Not to say 'energy' has no place in puppetry, but for the puppeteer, an in-depth nuts and bolts awareness of movement and the refined ability to sense differences are useful both for construction and for puppeteering. FM is not focused on levels of materiality that are beneath normal human levels of perception such as Body Mind Centering (BMC), where blood flow and the lymph, for example, are given as much importance as the musculoskeletal system in movement. BMC might also enrich a puppeteer's research, but in a basic training, FM's focus on awareness of the functioning of the musculoskeletal system (although this is a means, not an end, for the method itself) is of more use as a grounding. It offers a dynamic anatomy life class for puppeteers, where movement is understood from within and not just from visual observation (which also has its place). FM is about awareness and learning how to learn in order to explore more of human potential. It uses movement as a means to work on these things, because movement can be seen and felt. It works with materiality and movement and so does puppetry. Puppetry concretizes ideas so that they exist as physical moving things in the world. ATP proposes using puppeteering to heighten awareness since it concretizes and amplifies movement outside oneself.

5.5 Meshworks and skill

Rather than an abstract concept of materiality, Ingold would prefer direct engagement with materials themselves, 'following what happens to them as they circulate, mix with one another, solidify and dissolve in the formation of more or less enduring things' (2011:16). Such a direct engagement with materials is the domain of puppetry, and, in a sense, of FM. Both are interested

in what happens as it happens, rather than being focused on the outcome. In FI, both practitioner and student are thinking, feeling, sensing and moving and all of these elements come into play in a lesson. The conversation of a puppeteer with her puppet is differently weighted; the puppet itself is thought, felt, sensed and moved, but it only moves back. The impetus for its movement might come from the puppeteer, but this is added to by the response of the material - it is not possible to give the same impulse to a feather and a rock; they already create a different resistance in me. The wider context also influences the movement; to move a feather outside in the wind is not the same as to move it in a vacuum, or in water. In terms of the meshwork, a person can be seen as a more complex bundle of lines involving more variables than an inanimate thing.

Ingold proposes:

Bringing things to life ... is a matter not of adding to them a sprinkling of agency but of restoring them to the generative fluxes of the world of materials in which they came into being and continue to subsist. This view, that things are in life rather than life in things, is diametrically opposed to the conventional anthropological understanding of animism. (2011:29)

This thinking helps appreciate the intricate enmeshment of person-image and world; things are in life, things are in people's lives, people mix, merge with and separate from things constantly. The materiality of objects becomes our materiality and ours theirs. The meshwork of everything together allows stuff to happen; the meshwork is 'the condition for agency'. Playing with person-image is a way of focusing on what is possible in the meshwork. What I do with a puppet begins with what I do.

Ingold claims:

only the body remembers. Thus, in the relation between hand and saw there lies a fundamental asymmetry. The hand can bring itself into use, and in its practised movements can tell the story of its own life. But the saw relies on the hand for its story to be told. (2011:57) (His italics.)

If I replace 'saw' with 'puppet', does this hold true? To an extent, yes. The saw can itself be seen as a (potential) puppet; an old saw will have a patina which tells a story, and a brand new one will also express something before the hand touches it. In a piece of object theatre, or even a conventionally staged play, the old and the new saw do not tell the same story. Having a puppetic regard for things allows them to tell stories even before they are touched. The saw reaches out to the puppeteer, appealing to her imagination and senses. Baker acknowledges this in exercises such as asking someone to pick an object to be themselves and then speak as the object; 'I am this vase. My life is empty at the moment. But I'll soon be filled again'. An old, chipped vase with a hole in it would tell a different story, even accompanied by the same text. Baker also gets participants to interview objects via a 'curator'; 'A can of coca cola was asked: "We have heard you make people happy" (the curator had given this information in their museum presentation), "How do you do this?" and the coke replied: "I alter the chemicals in their brain"' (Baker *Eloquent Objects*). A crushed can or an unopened one here convey different things. Perhaps Ingold's saw relies on the hand to tell its story, but the human imagination, and different hands, want to give it other stories too. Ingold sees things as acquiring meaning through use rather than having affordances, and I would argue that seeing puppets and objects as affordances serves to reduce rather than expand their emergent expressive potential. The imagination does not want to be bossed around by affordances.

Regardless of whether the thing in question is obviously anthropomorphic or not, imagining a story for an object involves anthropomorphizing it or, at the very least, seeing it in relation to the living; seeing it as part of the meshwork. Baker notes:

anthropomorphising doesn't necessarily mean giving objects a head, eyes, arms and legs or making puppets gesticulate like a person. If I see a car going by and imagine it to be sneaky, it is not gesturing but is probably moving in a stealthy rhythm. (Baker *Anthropomorphism*)

The new saw next to the old might look rigid and inexperienced, the old one well-worn, flexible and precise. The way they look is one thing, the way they act is another; it is actually the way they interact with my person-image. What is the difference in the person-image I imagine for an axe used to chop wood, or used to move a spider and her web from the corner of a room? The axe does not actually have a person-image, of course, but if I am puppeteering the axe, I might imagine a rigid, compact person-image for the chopping axe, whereas the web-moving axe might have more of a sense of elongation and ability to reach. The chopper character might need to be more of an extension of my person-image whereas the web mover might require me to endow it more with its own person-image. Intention comes into play and can also be seen as a guiding rod for person-image. A feather can be used to tickle or to torture; the action is more or less the same, but the intention very different.

The tool is not separate from the user at the point of use because the user extends her person-image into the tool or incorporates the tool in her person-image - they become a functional whole. They are also related functionally in a meshwork including what the tool is being used on, with or in the context of. Ingold says, "bringing into use' is a matter not of attaching an object with certain attributes to a body with certain anatomical features, but of

joining a story to the appropriate gestures' (2011:58). Paying attention and shifting person-image is key to effecting a change in the dynamics of the meshwork in which it is entangled. What I do with myself affects what is done in the world. This might sound rather obvious. But often the thought 'I want to change the world' is not preceded by 'how can I change my person-image so I act differently in the world and contribute to its change'. In puppetry, when the onus is on the aesthetic or how to get such and such an effect without care for what the puppeteer is doing or how she is experiencing things, there is a risk of injury or unnecessary wear (e.g. on a shoulder joint). The audience might also think, that looks hard, uncomfortable, awkward and so on. Which is not to say that the puppeteer's comfort should be paramount; performance is physically demanding. Jones thinks it inevitably will be painful; 'pain is part of the pleasure of performance' (264). I would distinguish, however, between discomfort and detrimental pain. Performance should not be dangerous to the individual, but it might be arduous and tiring. Pain and danger (beyond ordinary risk) might be a choice but one perhaps more likely to be made in the performance or live art arena. This is not the place to discuss the ethical issues around this.

5.5.1 The puppeteer-puppet relationship

The puppeteer cannot see what the audience sees and at least part of what she produces to be seen is mediated beyond her body, so she can only partially feel or sense what is happening and what image she is creating. This is where the art of proprioceptive handling becomes so important; if I have a heightened sensitivity to the dialogue with the material, I have a greater chance of producing the desired images as rehearsed. My sensitivity will

communicate to the audience, even if subliminally, which will help paste over any accidents that occur because I can't see what I'm producing and therefore can't rectify it in the moment it occurs.

One might think that Kaplin's distance-and-ratio puppetry classification model, described in Chapter 2, corresponds to a scale going from more integrated with person-image to less integrated, or towards the puppet being endowed with a separate person-image, but this is not automatically the case. The puppet can be part of the body and an object which allows me to incorporate other objects into my body schema or a channel, even when my hand is inside it, for a separate entity from me and my person-image. This relates to control (manipulation) and loss of control (possession), or submission, which is not the same as being out of control. It also relates to awareness as Feldenkrais understood it. The marionette is a technical form of puppet and requires great skill to puppeteer successfully since the connection between puppet and puppeteer is not rigid, so she cannot directly impart impulses to it²⁶. For this reason, *it* is a fine master or guide. The puppeteer must allow its limbs to respond according to their weight and gravity; it is less forgiving than a hand, rod or table-top puppet. With these, if I get the gaze right and have some sort of logic to the movement (weight in table-top puppets, height in hand and rod puppets), I can get away with being over-controlling or not listening to my puppet to an extent. With a string puppet my capacity to direct its movement is so fragile, so sensitive, that it requires heightened awareness. In some sense then, marionettes require a more analytic process for their manipulation and are not puppets to get lost in -

²⁶ Having watched a class in Chinese hand puppets at ESNAM in Charleville, these puppets too are extremely technical, requiring great dexterity in part due to their lightness and small size (relative to typical Western hand puppets) and the acrobatic feats in their typical movement repertory.

Stephen Mottram is an example of a string puppeteer who works very analytically. And yet, if one can really be in a dance with one, this aspect drops away - Christopher Leith is an example of a puppeteer who gave into the dance. ATP is concerned with this dance with the material, although just as analysing a skeleton-object in FM training is useful, an analytic approach to puppeteering can also play its part.

So, there is another scale worth imagining for ATP, which goes from manipulation to possession, or from high awareness of one's activity as a puppeteer to being lost in it. It is related to but not identical to Kaplin's.

5.6 Imagining things

Using Feldenkrais's 'five lines' image of the person, the practitioner might ask, how far are your arm lines from your mid-line? Are your leg lines equidistant from your mid-line? Is your head directly on top of the mid-line or a little to one side?²⁷ The abstraction of the self in this pared down image is quite puppet-like in itself, involving picturing the basic relationship between the lines that conjure the person. If a puppet-maker wanted to make a convincing puppet of me, she could identify these lines and their relationships in stillness and motion in order to reproduce my personal neutral. The puppeteer could get a sense of these lines in motion in order to produce a sense of my gait. How do the parts relate to each other on a basic level as they travel through space? The clearer the image of the movement is for the person, Feldenkrais tells us, the closer the movement will be to the person's intention. A puppet can be made from just these lines, or even fewer as Blumenthal notes; 'four sticks and

²⁷ The mid-line is not only a concern with regards symmetry or asymmetry in movement but from a neurological point of view.

a giant bean as limbs and a head, with no body at all in the middle' (73). Here the distal parts in movement suggest the proximal, where smaller movement usually occurs.

Mottram makes the lines implicit, working just with points²⁸. This idea as a tool for studying movement appears to have been developed first by Bernstein (Latash 277), a major influence on Feldenkrais according to Haller (2010) and Reese (2015:183-4). With just five ping-pong balls, Mottram creates a simplified, point-light puppet. He demonstrates the basic human walking pattern, where the head must come over the supporting foot before the opposing foot is raised, creating a zig-zag pathway along the ground if the figure is moving forwards. This pattern is unique to humans since we are bipedal, have a relatively high centre of gravity, and are wider in the frontal than in the sagittal plane. The audience sees the 'body'. Abstraction is important in understanding movement in puppetry and person-image in FM.

28 From what was initially a training tool, used for demonstrating puppetry principles, Mottram developed a show, introduced thus; 'In 1971, The Swedish Psychologist Gunnar Johansson attached white markers to a few key points on a black-costumed actor's body and then filmed the actor walking against a black background. When the film was played back, he was surprised to find that the white spots seen moving relative to each other on the screen contained so much information, that not only could the viewer immediately identify a human walking, but also the gender, age and mood of the person. Johansson's research was the gold nugget which led the film industry to the techniques of motion capture. In *The Parachute* Stephen Mottram uses the idea in reverse. The white tips of his multiple magic wands reveal ephemeral characters whose lives we end up caring about' (Mottram). I saw this show live at London International Mime Festival 2017. See Dziala for a video clip.

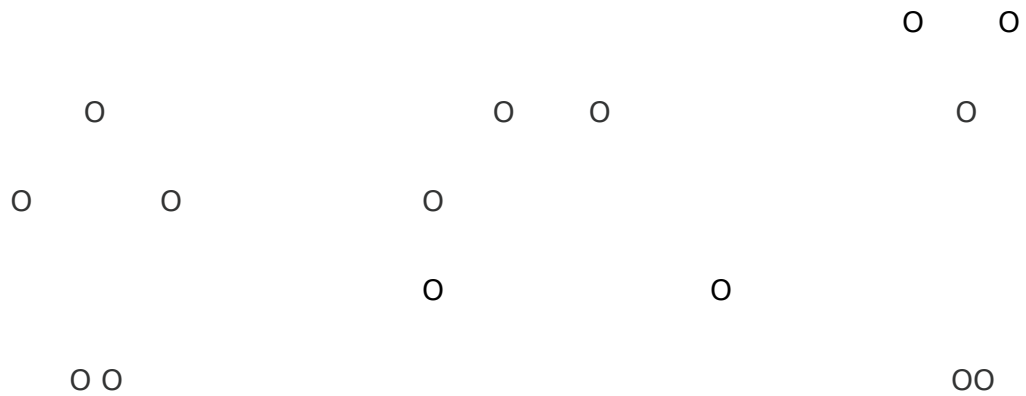


Fig. 9 Three schematic depictions of Stephen Mottram's ping-pong puppet.

Feldenkrais uses lines while Mottram uses points to suggest the whole. In relation to Ingold's meshwork of lines, Feldenkrais's five lines give more of a sense of continuity into and with the material world; Mottram's points are more schematic, but it is interesting that the human brain reconstructs so much from such minimal information. Picking up movement signals was once related to survival; it was worth knowing if there was a bear or a person in the distance. Mottram's model retains the spatial and temporal rhythm of movement. However, having seen Mottram's ping-pong puppets performing, I think they are somewhat limited in the kinds and qualities of movement they can show; perhaps five points are not enough for nuance.

As a FM practitioner, I look at both form and movement, with my eyes, and also with my hands, through touch. The way a person stands, her 'posture', is movement, and tells me about her movement patterns. The way a person lies, the form she takes, also tells me about how she moves, and about her person-image. If her back is arched up off the table significantly, I know that there is residual tonicity in her extensor muscles and these are doing more work than necessary when she is standing or moving. This area might be said to lack presence in her person-image. Form holds the traces of movement. In

order to flesh out my person-image, I pay attention to (scan) my form in lying, sitting or standing relatively still, and to myself in movement. As I sense my student moving (more than when I observe her) I get a sense of the particularities of her skeletal structure, for example her hip joints might be more or less hooded with bone, allowing greater or less freedom of movement. A puppet will lend itself to certain kinds of movement, some of which I will have been able to foresee, but some which I probably couldn't. The movement of the puppet is governed by its form, but also by the movement input from the puppeteer, so by my form (including my size) and movement. The more clearly I understand how person-image is expressed in movement in myself and others, the more conscious choices I can make when designing and building a puppet, or working with a puppet-maker.

Going back to Kleist and Craig who might be seen as suggesting that the actor can learn from the puppet, there is an extent to which puppets are governed by physics, not by desires or emotions and so on, so for movement purposes they are indeed good guides. FM is, in a way, a puppetic view of the moving human in that it asks how people can move in accordance with their physical structure in gravity. But, just as in FM we don't really need to know the laws of physics, Baker claims the same is true of the puppeteer; observation of movement in the world (harking back to Lecoq) is enough to feed the puppeteer's creation.

I have already mentioned the imagination in terms of allowing it to connect to things beyond affordances. Some FM lessons ask only for imagined movement, imperceptible to an outside observer, or simply movement of the

attention, and all ATMs can be 'done' in the imagination²⁹. This little gap between imagining and doing, the inhibition of the action, is potent. I was always a 'do-er', a physical performer, and this (tricky) place has had a lot to teach me. Imagining person-image in movement opens up FM and connects it to puppetry for me. It is the place of intention. Being about to move, or having an intention to move, but not 'doing' it. I learnt this lesson with Christopher Leith, and later with Rene Baker, hanging around with puppets, or listening to the material. Listening to the place where intention meets materiality and movement emerges.

Without touching, the puppeteer can imagine movement with and of the thing; where does the thing go, where do my hands and the rest of myself go, what does the thing want to do or say? But also whilst holding the thing; what does the imagination offer without fulfilling itself in external action? What wants to move first? By inhibiting movement, what fresh insight into our relationship emerges? If I hold a hammer, my initial image might be to hit nails with it (or, at worst, a person; it seems made to hit), but I could also weigh it in my hand or make it into a pendulum, or dip it in paint and use it as a brush, or make it into a puppet with a long nose. Perhaps the practice of separating the moment of impulse and action, as in FM, allows for a richer panoply of possible action to emerge for the puppeteer. It offers another way of approaching one's relationship with the thing and what it will come to express or mean. Beyond opening up the possible action within the moment, this is also about opening up possible thoughts; questioning the habitual in relation to action and things and their use.

29 This can be important in cases where physical movement is impossible. Myriam Pfeffer recounts, for example, how she avoids an operation after a fractured femur head by imagining herself walking in great detail and with many variations until she can actually physically do it again. She also acknowledges that this is possible because of her practice and familiarity with herself already as an experienced FM trainer; she does not recommend such a procedure for novices without guidance ("Myriam Pfeffer").

Provocations for a puppeteer

(Awareness Through Puppetry)¹

Puppeteers can gain familiarity with the idea of person-image doing ATMs, both where it is the explicit subject, and where it is not². The scanning stage of the ATM can be tuned to their needs - grounding the hands in the pelvis and feet, developing a soft enveloping gaze (the material is very pliable) - moving towards an integrated process of Awareness Through Puppetry. What follows are suggestions for exploration beyond existing ATMs. The 'puppet' might also be an object or material; the suggestions can be interpreted accordingly.

1) Before touching your puppet (with the puppet out of sight, then in sight).

- Observe yourself in standing, walking and lying.
- How clear is your person-image? How much of you is included in your person-image?
- Where do you end? Where are your borders?
- What awareness do you have of what's in front of you; behind you; to your right; to your left; above you; underneath you; all around you?
- How does the floor support you? How do you find support from the floor?

1 Coad offers a detailed introduction to string puppeteering which teams well with my provocations (2007 ch.7). He emphasizes finding ease and economy of movement and suggests an almost Feldenkraisian approach, finding the extreme points of each movement and direction systematically and then establishing where the marionette remains in control.

2 For short recorded ATMs, see "audio library". For full-length recorded ATMs, see *OpenATM.org*.

2) Touch your puppet somewhere on the outside of its 'body' - its hand, head, back etc. - not where you would normally hold it.

- Diminish the pressure of your fingers against the puppet. Sense how you feel the object less and less and your fingers more and more.
- When you are barely touching, what do you experience?

3) Holding your puppet as if to perform with it (whatever the technique)

- The same questions as in 1) plus
- Can you sense your person-image extending into your puppet? Has your puppet become part of your person-image?
- Does the puppet have its own person-image? Do you endow it with person-image?
- Play with these variables: person-image extending into puppet; puppet as part of your person-image; the puppet has its own person-image; you endow the puppet with person-image.
- Play with the scales of including the puppet or extending into the puppet and the feeling of two person-images, yours and the puppet's.
- Who moves first? You or the puppet? Where from? What dominates your person-image(s)?
- Switch to supporting the puppet with the other hand and ask the same questions. What differences do you notice?

4) Try the same questions as in 1) and 3) holding your puppet in a non-habitual way (not the way you normally would to perform e.g. hold a hand-puppet by the back of its neck or cradled in your arms, hold a string puppet by its feet or by its neck and nose³).

³ Steve Tiplady refers to similar non-habitual holding (Ylä-Hökkala et al 339) and, as previously mentioned, Philippe Rodriguez-Jorda also works with dishabituation practices, although neither relate them to a concept like person-image.

5) Try the same questions in different puppeteering positions, both habitual and non-habitual, e.g. lying down, kneeling, squatting.

6) Try the same questions on a multi-operated puppet.

- Are you each extending your person-image?
- Are you projecting a collectively imagined person-image? Do you agree on it?
- Are you plus the puppet a new entity with one person-image, a gestalt bigger than its parts?
- Imagine, then perform, the movements you make as an ensemble without holding the puppet, then with it again.

7) Without your puppet.

- Imagine a precise sequence of movement with your puppet until it becomes clear.
- Perform the movements without holding the puppet, then with it.

After these experiments, stand and walk around; notice any changes or anything new or unfamiliar in yourself and your interaction with the floor and the space that comes to your attention. What difference to you and your puppetry do these questions and experiences make? Gousseff has given ATMs to hand puppets, with the puppeteers lying down (Fredricksson); this is another possibility for exploration and adaptation.

Chapter 6

Case Studies: Protean person-images in performance

6 Preamble

Perceptions of myself and material things in their relations are at the core of both FM and puppetry, and indeed life; from this comes meaning. In the last chapter I began to sketch out a path towards Awareness Through Puppetry/ Puppetry Through Awareness, giving some practical suggestions as to how FM and puppetry might interlace. In this chapter I look at examples from contemporary performance which lead me to propose a future of puppetry which lies in a radical investigation of the basic ground where person-image is acknowledged as a constant, but nodal, becoming, as the now where human and nonhuman merge and transform together.

6.1.1 Theoretical groundwork: a critique of 'manipulating'

Piris uses 'manipulating' to refer to a range of situations where the puppeteer and puppet are both present in performance; the puppeteer is not invisible or drawing focus only to the puppet, but also to herself. He calls this 'co-presence' which he says 'takes place between the puppeteer and the puppet':

This co-presence is particular because it establishes a relation of self to Other between two beings that are ontologically different: one is a subject (in other words, a being endowed with consciousness) and the other one an object (in other words, a thing). Yet, the particularity of the puppet is to present an ontological ambiguity because it is an object that appears in performance as a subject. Co-presence stresses this

ontological ambiguity by confronting the puppet with a human protagonist. (2014:30)

I am interested in performance which elides subjects and objects to the point where any clear distinction between them becomes nonsense; meaning and reality is born of connections and relationships. As we have seen, Piris assumes the puppeteer's 'body schema encompasses two bodies: the actual body of the puppeteer and the apparent body of the puppet' (31). He does not clarify what he means by body schema and, even in the performances he refers to, it is not always clear where these two 'bodies' meet and merge. He writes:

Co-presence requires the hybridization of ... two forms of body schema ... which is a challenge because it supposes solving a contradiction. In acting, the actors' aim is to focus the audience's attention on their body, whereas the puppeteers' aim is to focus the audience's attention on the puppets. The co-presence of the puppeteer and the puppet requires that a double focus on both the performer and the puppet is achieved. (31)

There are several assumptions here. While I agree that the puppeteer experiences the world 'in another way than the actor'¹, he presumes there are two forms of body schema, but in fact there is in each case one person with her malleable body schema. Returning to Gallagher's distinction between body schema and body-image, it would be more accurate to talk about the body-image, or, to use my term, the person-image. Body schema relates to what a person does; person-image involves what she thinks she does and is accessible to awareness whereby it becomes the route to shifting body schematic action. Some puppeteers might have more in common with one of Kantor's actors in

¹ He actually writes, the puppeteer's body and the actor's body experience the world in different ways, but I would argue it is the person who experiences, not the 'body'.

their person-image play than with the puppeteer Neville Tranter, who is one of Piris's examples. A person adapts her body schema constantly in everyday life when she puts on a certain pair of shoes, uses a hammer to bang in nails, or drives a car². Puppeteering is, in a sense, just a specific form of playing with body-image in relation to a tool or worn item. The puppeteer creates a fictional person-image for the puppet which will help an audience see, or imagine it, as a subject, which is to say, as having its own person-image which produces a way of moving (body schema).

Piris claims the actor's aim is to focus the audience's attention on her body, but in my view this might just be bad acting, especially if it is the priority or only choice available. There are many things which might be said to be the actor's aim; to convey the character vividly, to tell the story, to deflect attention from himself onto another at a key point, to find complicity with the other actors, to speak a line so that you feel as if he is whispering in your ear at the back of the highest balcony, and so on. Theatre is always about the whole situation. A parameter will have been decided which might be that the stage world exists behind a fourth wall or it might also include the audience, the building or the world beyond³. A pole dancer or a stripper might be said to want the audience to focus on his or her body, but the actor's work does not necessarily involve (only) this. In this sense, acting and puppetry are not as far apart as Piris makes out. The actor is also involved in creating something in collaboration with all the material elements present. The difference is that she is not trying to make it seem as though there are other subjects present; other

2 A friend painted my four-year old's nails; 'Do I look like a different person?' she asked. She clearly felt like one.

3 For example In *S.#08 STRASBOURG* (2004) by Societas Raffaello Sanzio, a coach load of passengers visible beyond the glass wall of the theatre is part of the performance (Cas-tellucci 151). In *En Chantier* (2004), Mark Tompkins took a video camera into the wings, backstage and beyond.

beings possessed of person-image also interacting with and emerging from what's in the performance.

Schönbein, whose work I consider below, offers a subtly different view from Piris. She claims if *the puppet* plays well, the audience watches it, but if it plays badly, they see the actor; 'The puppet stays intact and, in spite of its obvious dependence, always itself'⁴ (24). There is a sense here that if the puppeteer follows the puppet, the puppet will be seen, rather than using a conscious desire to focus the audience's attention on what she does.

Both the actor (worth her salt) and the puppeteer (including Schönbein) are nevertheless playing with focus. Shifting focus, or attention, is a central strategy used by Feldenkrais to explore and develop students' self-image. Therefore, rather than refer to co-presence, which involves discussion of subjects and objects as separate entities, I choose to discuss the movement of attention as it relates to person-image, which can include my puppeteering body and things it connects with directly or remotely. I find this less constraining as a concept, and it allows me potentially to address a broader range of performance.

6.1.2 From Self-Other to dynamic person-image

The notion of a dynamic person-image, where a person's awareness and attention are constantly incorporating and rejecting parts of the outside *and the inside* in an ongoing process, avoids the Self-Other binary. For example, at the moment my right shoulder hurts a bit, so although my awareness is drawn to it, it is a zone of low awareness in the sense that it is not being supported

⁴ My trans. of 'La marionnette reste intacte et, malgré son évidente dépendance, toujours elle-même'.

by the rest of me. The route towards reintegrating it as a more functional (and less painful) part of my person-image is probably not through focusing on the shoulder itself, but by asking of the rest of myself, in collaboration with the ground, why are you making this pain in the right shoulder, or how can you support this shoulder better? In the last sentence the difficulty in writing coherently about this subject becomes clear; I use the term 'myself', tempered with the idea of collaboration with the ground, but nevertheless, 'myself' as somehow distinct from something else. There are also collaborations occurring with the curry I ate yesterday, my toddler who was up for two hours in the night and the fact that Trump was elected as President last week. My person-image currently involves all of this.

Piris' notion of co-presence of the puppeteer and of the puppet, which he relates to body schema, is of interest to me if tempered with the notion of processual and plastic person-image which can be used to create a fictional person-image for the puppet. Piris approaches his argument as a puppeteer and through aspects of the philosophy of Sartre and Levinas. I approach mine as a puppeteer and FM practitioner. My understanding of person-image is not based on philosophical speculation, although almost unavoidably this comes into play. Fundamentally my argument assumes that moving is a source of knowledge.

Piris elaborates on 'the interplay between the perception of the objectness of the puppet and the imagination of its subjectness'. He uses Sartre's idea that perception and imagination are different ways for consciousness to relate to an object; the object is encountered as present by perception but is absent for the imagination. Piris states, 'Sartre argues that the image is not a thing but a relation ... What is imagined is an object that is not present but that we bring back to our consciousness. Therefore, between

perception and imagination there is a difference of nature and not of degree' (2014:39). In the case of imagining movement in FM, the object is not absent. So how is this different to perception? Perception of movement would be what I can sense moving when at rest; maybe I sense my breath moving my ribs. Imagination of movement would be an active attempt to imagine myself making some movement or other. Perception of my spine would be what I can actually, although implicitly, sense. Imagination might be actively used to place my attention systematically at different points along my spine such that I create a more detailed image of it for myself. The distinction is not crystal-clear since I don't just perceive my spine but use some kind of strategy to do so; perception is an activity. In both cases the object of imagination is present. What implications does this have for Piris' argument regarding puppets (on which I am merely proposing a different angle which might be practically and theoretically productive)?

The difference between acts of imagination and perception with regards to ourselves is not as clear as Piris makes out. Although Feldenkrais proposes a specific kind of imagination of myself in often unfamiliar movement, I am constantly involved in imagining myself in past and future actions. It is the way I reflect on what I've done and make future plans. Feldenkrais proposes harnessing this inadvertent process and using it in a more directed way. I would argue, using Piris' terms, that in FM there is an 'interplay between the perception of the objectness' of myself and my imagination of my 'subjectness'; this is my person-image. The power of the puppet comes from externalizing the object, or extending the objectness of the person beyond her body and pouring fictional subjectness into this extremity, or endowing it with subjectness.

Piris concludes that 'the puppet is not an Other but the image of an Other' (41). I find this too categorical; a puppet can also be the projected person-image of an other, and puppetry an imaginative play with my person-image to split and extend it. A way to challenge and question my person-image. In order to explore this further I look at works from three performance makers: *Fastoche* (Pierre Tual), *Chair de ma chair* (Ilka Schönbein) and *Self Unfinished* (Xavier le Roy). I do not consider these pieces more broadly in the context of each artist's work in a detailed manner, but look closely at each from the point of view of person-image.

6.2 Pierre Tual and company / *Fastoche* (2014)⁵



Fig. 10 Jonathan sitting on sofa with Georges and Jimmy in *Fastoche*, 2014. Image © Véro-nique Lespérat-Héquet.

⁵ I saw this show live in Dives-sur-mer, France, in July 2016, and had access to a film of it (Tual and Aspeli). 'Fastoche' means 'easy-peasy' in French.

Fastoche tells the tale of a child who remains in the adult and projects the old person he might become. It evokes in literal manner the way person-image in the present emerges from how one was in the past and contains a possible future if certain habits remain unchallenged. The plot, in a nutshell, is this; the main character (Jonathan) encounters a boy (Jimmy) and an old man (Georges) in the 'real world' and they are suddenly present, in a magical realist way, in the flat he has been lent by a friend (fig. 10). Jonathan leads a hermetic life, rarely venturing out and not responding to the doorbell or phone. His existence is perturbed by these visitations but eventually he leaves the flat. The story is rooted in the everyday; it is described as 'a humanist chronicle, an interior, phantasmagorical ballad, a little naïve philosophical tale... for those who invent problems for themselves to make life more complicated, but also funnier and more adventurous' ("Fastoche Présentation" 7). Jonathan reminds me of Keith Johnstone's 'No'-sayer: 'There are people who prefer to say 'Yes', and there are people who prefer to say, 'No'. Those who say 'Yes' are rewarded by the adventures they have and those who say 'No' are rewarded with the safety they attain' (2007:92). Here though, a person who seems to say 'No' to the 'real' world (but 'Yes' to his imagined world) has an adventure within himself. Reality and imagination are pitted against and work on each other in a way that is of interest to me since it is precisely this interplay that produces shifting person-image.

On stage are an actor, a musician/lighting technician sitting at a piano and three hand-held puppets - two roughly human-size and one about 50cm high. The human-size puppets are Jimmy and Georges⁶. They are stylistically slightly different, the child more like a ventriloquist's doll, but both are realist

⁶ Zich suggests that human-size puppets might be more troubling than smaller puppets which he claims retain a mysterious stillness (Plassard 82).

without being hyperreal. Tual moves the puppets from one location to another on stage simply and practically; he does not 'walk' them. He makes them climb over and around him in different locations; the sofa, the breakfast bar, the carpet and the piano/microphone area. Both have mouths articulated like ventriloquists' dolls. The actor makes some attempt to mask his face when he voices them, particularly as he sets up the characters, but he does not use ventriloquial technique and moves his mouth normally. He puts his hand inside the backs of the puppets to make their mouths move via a mechanism, and otherwise moves them as whole entities, changing their positions in relation to him, making them cling to him by attaching their hands around his neck or legs, and occasionally manipulating a hand to make a gesture or self-contact.



Fig. 11 First appearance of Tual with puppets in *Fastoche*, 2014. Image © Véronique Lespérat-Héquet.

Tual's technique is a form of 'corps-castelet', a practice originated by Nicolas Gousseff under the tutelage of Alain Recoing (*Conférence* 00:52:00). Literally meaning something like 'body-booth', 'castelet' refers to the playboard used in puppet performance, thus 'corps-castelet' is the use of one's body, visible to the spectator, as the puppet's performance space or scenography (Fredricksson 240). Our first sight of Jimmy is clinging to the actor's leg (fig. 11) rather than speaking or in a physical relationship with the puppeteer, which might have made him seem more like a vent doll, such as sitting on his lap. Both puppet characters have come from the real world according to the story, both are male (and white), both rely on the central character for life and are needy as characters, both are voiced by him; the voices come from the actor, they are facets of him, this is a self-dialogue. The child is his past and the old-man a possible future, or a patriarchal father-figure whom he can never please. The fact the child resembles a vent doll does not perturb the central matter of the piece; a ventriloquist and her doll are also in a self-dialogue and all the same questions of control, who has the upper hand and whose voice emerges pertain in a similar way.

The makers claim:

We wanted to mask the link between puppets and puppeteer as little as possible because the puppets are part of the character. So the work was about erasing the actor in order to give more life and autonomy to the puppets, while also emphasizing his presence because it's the cohabitation which allowed us to explore the conflict of the hero. That seems contradictory, but it's precisely this ambivalence which interests us; the meeting point of the animate and inanimate. ("Fastoche Présentation" 7)

The central character is an erasure; he is experiencing an identity crisis, and he is staged in such a way as to erase him further in order to boost the presence

of the puppets. However, the show is about him. If a criticism is to be levelled at it, it is that drama is not about conflict, but about conflict resolution, and here the resolution comes suddenly and simply when Jonathan leaves and the characters fly off (literally, from the balcony on the end of a kite). It feels as though the story in the flat could have carried on and his leaving could have happened at any point. Perhaps this was intentional, exploring the idea that the choice to change, or to accept change, is not necessarily precipitated by anything in particular, but just comes. The piece is flawed, in my view, but well-crafted and skilfully performed.

The two performers are white men in their early thirties. The piece is about the banal existential crisis of a thirty-year old white male lacking direction in life, implicitly heterosexual; he is troubled by the seductive presence of the Marianne, the religious zealot at the door. It was loosely inspired by the novel *Naïf. Super* by Erlend Loe (1996, French edition 2003), a white male Norwegian writer in his mid-twenties about a self-similar and implicitly heterosexual character. I am stressing the young, white, heterosexual, male projection of experience since it is typically criticized in feminist circles as being mistaken as representative of universal human experience. *Fastoche* explores a certain lassitude and directionless mental wandering that has been seen as characteristic of the millennial generation, maybe more so of males, but which is distinct from older masculine stereotypes (macho, bread-winner, boss and so on). Its exploration of the uncertainty and fluidity in this tendency means it breaks with more traditional masculinist roles and discourse. *Fastoche* was made in collaboration with three women - the co-director, writer and puppet-maker, that is to say, the co-producers of the form and content of the piece. However, the piece is an

existential inner dialogue, and not savvy about, or simply not interested in, questions of difference or unchallenged norms.

As a female audience member and mother, however, I felt a connection to the material. The piece was open enough to accommodate my experience in spite of initially suggesting it might be only a narcissistic, young, white, male story. This came partly the sense of blurring of person-image on seeing the protagonist, Jonathan, with Jimmy clinging to his leg and Georges to his neck. Their physical presence as puppets, and their need to be carried and cared for, cannot help but remind me of my life of the past few years, caring for a baby, then toddler, now young child. In the show, time passes ever so slowly, filled with nothing much to show for it, and there are precise references to time throughout; watching the minutes and days go by in a life of mundane, repetitive activity with little punctuation. A bit like lone life with a baby/child! Georges also reminds me of my terminally ill dad who, although fiercely independent, needed to be cared for towards the end. It is more typically women who (still) find themselves caring, often simultaneously, for young children and ageing parents.

To see this young white man in this position is quite startling. He has to look after them although they are aspects of himself, 'inner phantoms', 'monsters'; what Tual calls in the blurb about the show, 'Terrifying mirrors. The ghosts of bygone childhood. Old age in a hurry, knocking at the door before its time' ("Fastoche"). These figments of Jonathan's imagination need feeding, washing, taking to the toilet, playing with, keeping safe and getting to sleep. He is alone in his task, isolated. This resonated with my experience of life as a new mother, cut off from my former life of work and purpose. Jonathan gets to walk away at the end, leaving Jimmy and Georges in the flat; he watches them fly away on the end of the boy's kite spool in the show's oneiric conclusion. A

woman, of course, does not get to walk away typically; even when the child leaves home she is still mother, and the child is in some sense still clinging to her leg (forever part of her person-image)⁷. While I am fairly certain Tual and team did not have resonance with early motherhood in mind, the story of a dispersed, evolving and conflictual person-image speaks beyond the particularity of this character. (Although the ending brought me back ever so slightly to, 'Ha! The male experience; leave the flat, close the door behind you and watch your problems fly away on the wind!'.)

Fastoche uses the puppets as an 'appui' or support for its exploration of person-image. 'Appuyer' in French means support, but also press or press into. I find my 'appui' or support through my skeleton by pressing into and away from the ground. By concretizing the characters as puppets rather than leaving them as voices in Jonathan's head, the need to deal with them physically arises. They make real, physical demands on the actor just as the skeleton makes demands on the person (to move in certain ways and not others). They are a creative constraint. Evolving relationships must be found with them throughout the piece. Thus, the drama of Jonathan's shifting person-image is played out between the three main bodies on stage. The joy of *Fastoche* comes from the fact that I perceive the actor to be in three places at once; in his body and in the two puppets. Not just as an idea, but as a physical reality.

The piece is punctuated by songs, mostly sung as Jonathan, except one which is sung by, as, or through, Georges (Figs. 12 & 13), with different implications for how Tual is playing with person-image. If the song is sung *by* the puppet, Tual has successfully created a separate person-image for Georges. If it's *as* Georges, the puppet has become part of Tual/Jonathan's

⁷ This 'mothering' role might of course also be played by a single father, or a man who is the main carer for his child or children.

person-image. If it's *through*, Tual extends his person-image into the puppet. I think it shifts as the song develops; it starts being sung by Georges and Tual/Jonathan is almost invisible. When Tual/Jonathan lifts George up, he sings the song through Georges, extending his person-image into the puppet. The shift happens because Tual goes from being behind, partially hidden by and close to the puppet, to distant from the puppet to whom he is visibly giving his voice. The focus is still clearly on the puppet, but Jonathan projecting is also very much part of the stage picture.

In the opening song we see Jonathan for the first time; uptight in his unstylish jumper, arms held to the sides, thumbs nervously rubbing index fingers, feet close together, stiff and puppet-like. He sets up the story and expresses the need to 'let his body breathe'. He comes across as timid and afraid of life. If I were to give the character a FI lesson, my first instinct would be to work towards expansiveness and movement in his upper thorax, bringing clarity to this area into his person-image. I do not have the impression that Tual *is* like this; I feel he is very much in control of the person-image with which he endows his character, although he almost certainly has some part of his own person-image which is unclear and could be clarified, and since this character is based on his clown (Tual), it seems likely that the fictional person-image is related to his own. He has control over Jonathan and the puppets in a similar way. Not the kind of control where he imposes on them exactly what he wants, but in which he collaborates with them, with their particular materialities, to give them life.



Fig. 12 & 13 Two points in Georges' song in *Fastoche*, 2014. Image © Véronique Lespérat-Héquet (12); Jean Henry (13).

Jonathan recounts taking the kite - symbol of the levity and freedom he lacks - on the beach since the boy disappears without it. This act brings Jimmy into his life. Our first sight of them is Jimmy clinging to his leg, and Georges (as yet unexplained) clinging to his neck. Both look at him - a neat reversal of the more typical puppet-puppeteer relationship where the puppeteer is looking at the puppet in order to give it focus. Jones cites focus as one of the principles of puppetry, 'watch your puppet's face' (264). Although Tual is also focused on them, he allows himself to behave sometimes as if they were independent entities; he is 'manipulacting' in Gilles/Piris' term. He is their puppet as much as they are his; he is at their beck and call. I see three people with person-images, rather than a puppeteer incorporating or projecting into puppets.

Georges, we learn, seeks Jonathan's help at the swimming pool. Jonathan nearly drowns them both in the process of trying to extricate himself. Georges follows him into a supermarket where he also re-encounters Jimmy. Both follow Jonathan and, although he gets inside the flat before them, there they are, on the sofa. Jonathan becomes implicated in the lives of these two people. He has the cherished kite of one and left the other to drown. Whether he likes it or not, they will be instrumental in the shift in person-image for which he is looking. A person is not a stand-alone entity - she is always intricately mixed up in the lives of others. The use of puppets here serves to underline the physical interdependency of people's person-images, created through and with each other.

These characters come from the outside world and through them Jonathan explores social aspects of person-image. Georges seems to voice what Jonathan thinks society, or older generations, make of him; he goes on and on about the wars that have been won and criticizes Jonathan for lounging around without a job or any idea of what to do with himself. Jonathan's person-

image is attacked both from the outside (the characters come from the outside world), and from the inside (they are puppets, inner phantoms, aspects of himself, voiced, moved and made real by him). Georges asks how Jonathan is going to get money to support the 'collectivity'. Tual explores the multiplicity of person-image through explosion - several selves are bodily present in distinct spaces although only one person is on stage.

Jonathan is unable to produce the person-image that would enable him to integrate society 'normally' by suppressing his organic needs (in Feldenkrais's terms), yet he also has no sense of these needs. The connections to society *and* himself are wearing thin. Instinctively he knows this, thus he produces a kind of family which enables his person-image to expand and converse with itself. Even alone, a person tends to multiply and seek connection and communication; the projections come both from the world outside and from within. *Fastoche* is an exploration of psychological person-image and it is this, more than the central character's person-image in the Feldenkraisian sense, which is moderately changed. The production pack for the show states, 'Facing his visions head on, Jonathan plunges into an imaginary battle with his phantoms; it's a combat with himself and the beings in his head,' who are also referred to as his 'imaginary friends' ("Fastoche Présentation" 5). Since the phantoms are puppets, the main way in which the actor embodies them or is troubled by them in his whole person is through his voice.

The voices of the three male characters are very distinct and it is the combination of voice and image which troubles. I see three characters; I know one is an actor and that the puppets' voices come from the actor. I know this but I allow myself to hear them as the puppets' voices. The puppet characters are imaginary but they are encountered in and come from the 'real' world.

They seem to have independence and power over Jonathan; they are 'tiring, omnipresent, absorbing, and they say exactly that which Jonathan doesn't dare to admit' (5). (Typical of puppets to express the suppressed!) Like a FM lesson (ATM or FI), the puppets give access to neglected areas of Tual/Jonathon. They force him to do things, pin him down, climb on him, wake him up, push and pull him, throw him off balance, provoke and interrupt him. They are puppets moved by the actor, so the physical conversation is with himself. At one point he almost kills off Jimmy who cooks the flat-owner's goldfish due to the lack of fish fingers on offer. Jonathan throws him off the third-floor balcony; he is run over by a Volvo, pissed on by a cat, gets up and rings the doorbell⁸. He is back.

Tual says Georges and Jimmy are 'not real, they're in his head. These are rôles for puppets; playing phantoms'⁹ ("Fastoche Revue de Presse"). I attribute his phrase, 'they're in his head', more to conventional thinking than describing what the show actually does, which is to impose these phantoms very much onto and into his body, through the exchange with his person-image which happens in his puppeteering, and through the voices he finds, so different from each other. At one point, he turns and voices Jimmy without the puppet, the effect is electric and both funny and shocking; Jimmy is present in this other, yet in this moment I also recognize that he is not *in* but *is* Jonathan. Tual makes two beings simultaneously present in one location.

The puppets are often abandoned on stage; they are built to remain upright and appear tonic, paused rather than dead, with a strong physical presence (fig. 14). The voices, however, are very much within Jonathan/Tual and of him, giving a sense of a multi-layered person-image. This throws up the

⁸ The fantasy of throwing your unruly child out of the window is surely one many parents have entertained - I know I have!

⁹ In an interview with Laura Lalande for *Téatrorama*.

question of the role of voice in person-image and the influence of person-image on voice. The voices of Georges and Jimmy come from Jonathan; this is particularly clear when he speaks with Jimmy's voice without the puppet. With nothing left to pull the viewer's focus away from the person speaking, it becomes unavoidable that that person is Jonathan. The audience is tricked; until this point the puppets have a life of their own. They come from the 'real' world, they have bodies, voices, personalities, ways of moving and speaking. Yet suddenly Jimmy is (in) Jonathan, the puppet's voice comes from the actor's body. My view of the actor's body morphs; the voice and body don't seem to correspond. I have a sense that Jonathan is possessed by the little boy, but also of the layered ages and phases within a single person. Jonathan was once this boy, although to the thirty year old man he seems remote, a lost aspect of himself. The puppets' voices are in and of the puppeteer.

Voice is an important part of person-image; as much as movement is produced in collaboration with environment, voice is also a dynamic interaction with the air and space around and in us. There is perhaps a point to be made here more generally about puppets that speak. Unless a technique of throwing the voice is used, the voice of the puppet will not come from the puppet. Voice is an intimate part of a person and her person-image, so the speaking puppet cannot be fully endowed with a sense of person-image of its own.



Fig. 14 Georges sitting alone in *Fastoche*, 2014. Image © Véronique Lespérat-Héquet.

It is possibly coincidental or unconscious, but nevertheless worth noting that the three male characters' names all begin with the consonant sound, 'je', which means 'I' in French. The show is an exploration of 'Je'. The two female characters offstage are not voiced by the actor but by a recorded female; the Ma of Maman (who leaves answerphone messages) is echoed in the name of the evangelist at the door, Marianne, a name which evokes the maternal figure of the Virgin Mary¹⁰. The female characters are described as coming from the real world ("Fastoche Présentation" 7). The presence-absence and otherness of these mother figures highlights the contradiction inherent in human experience; a person is always attached to others in some way but must

¹⁰ A commentary on the masculine view of the mother and females in the piece is possible. Marianne is represented by a comically tiny puppet; does Jonathan see himself as bigger and more important than this woman? The mother is of the stereotypical anxious/nagger type.

acquire independence.

The themes of independence and freedom were important to Feldenkrais for whom a more detailed self-image, or awareness of oneself in action, was key to potency and independence as an individual. This independence is characterized by freedom from feeling the need to fulfil societal and parental expectations, and recognizing one's organic needs in order to attain maturity and 'the potent self' (1990, 2002, 2005). It is neither selfish nor selfless but hangs on self-knowledge and awareness as a route to heightened intersubjective and world/environment awareness. Developing the self-image (according to which one is acting) is key to this for Feldenkrais.

Jonathan's mother leaves voice messages which he ignores; he seems annoyed by Jimmy who wants his mum. Marianne¹¹ whispers about taking care of his spiritual needs; arguably another kind of mothering. She comes out of a massive book, presumably a bible, she is not voiced by Tual and only appears once. After the fantasy, which is bookended by her voice at the door, Georges reprimands Jonathan for missing the opportunity and not letting her in; 'He's the loser of the year ... He has no backbone, he's a slug,'¹² (fig. 15). He calls him spineless, an expression indicating, interestingly, an inability to approach life in an affirmative or potent way. Fastoche has a subtext around dependence and independence. In spite of the process that has occurred inside the flat, the piece cannot end inside; Jonathan must and does return to the world outside. The shift in his person-image will only be affirmed when he confronts the outside world afresh.

11 Represented by a puppet 50cm high.

12 My trans. from the performance.



Fig. 15 Georges attacks Jonathan in *Fastoche*, 2014. Image © Véronique Lespérat-Héquet.

In a FM workshop I taught for drama students, one woman looked as though she was trying to shake off or stretch out the effects of a lesson, to return to her former, familiar sense of herself (as often happens); I observed that she might like to try not doing this and stay with the unfamiliar feeling to see what it brought her. Jonathan accepts the unfamiliarity imposed on him by Georges and Jimmy, but eventually shrugs it off. Dramaturgically, it might have been more satisfying (and more typical) to see a greater transformation. The character is just a little lighter at the end and the imagery bolsters this feeling with its airiness; Georges and Jimmy are carried off on the wind. The change is subtle and the existential precipice does not completely disappear from view.

The blurb for the show suggests the ending is optimistic, that he is 'Like everyone, like he was before, but with a smile' ("*Fastoche*"). The piece is

clownish and funny, but also dark and troubling, and this is not resolved at the end, although there is a small sense of relief that he gets out. The struggle to realize a full person-image will continue, it does not stop. Jonathan leaves his watch in the flat (abandoning the sense of time running out, or life passing him by?), the phantoms fly off, and the character hasn't changed much. This is a gentle transformation and, from a Feldenkraisian view of self-image, this is interesting. It's a first approximation. The piece is described as 'the ordinary epic of a guy searching for himself. A guy like you or me, banal perhaps, but hero of his own life!' ("Fastoche"). It celebrates that subtle change can be as powerful as radical change, which is interesting theatrically as well as in terms of life. Tual and his collaborators recognize that this is not a tragedy; the character is nowhere to begin with, with nowhere to fall. The piece is nevertheless engaging and memorable because it evokes co-present multiple person-images and this is the ongoing and never-finished story of every person's life.

6.3 Ilka Schönbein / *Chair de ma Chair* (2006)¹³



Figs. 16, 17, 18 Ilka Schönbein/the Mother in *Chair de ma Chair*, 2006. Image © Frederick Guerri.

Every protrusion can take the place of another. We have possibilities of transformation between phallus, nose, ear, hands, feet, fingers, toes, nipples and breasts; every round part can represent another - head, breasts, buttocks; every hole can be interchanged with another - mouth, ears (in some respects, eyes and pupils), openings of the nose and anus. Each zone has typical lines of extension. The anal zone extends over the back. The mouth will generally extend in the interior plane. The details are not yet very well known. Actions may create artificial caves in the body; the inside of the hand and the inside of the mouth and the inside of the genital region may be substituted for each other. (Schilder 2000:182-183)

Schilder's description of the malleability of body-image pertains to the metamorphic work of Ilka Schönbein, where a backside becomes a king's face,

¹³ I saw this show, inspired by *Pourquoi l'enfant cuisait dans la Polenta* (2004), a novel by Aglaja Veteranyi, at Le Grand Parquet in 2006, and had access to a film of it (Schönbein and Nota). 'Chair de ma Chair' means 'flesh of my flesh' in French.

a head the tail of a mermaid, a back a pregnant belly, ankles knees, knees buttocks and so on¹⁴. Puppets amplify, distort, project and focus her gestures (or those of the performers she works with); they are an expression of the body-image of the performer, articulated in space beyond herself¹⁵. 'Schilder writes, 'Whatever the psychic motives for the transformation myths may be, they are based on the plasticity of the body-image' (2000:205). Schönbein works precisely with the plastic body-image of myth and fairy-tale; Guidicelli refers to her 'zoomorphic body' (71). Her first solo work was the Ovidian-titled, *Métamorphoses* (1993), which she continued to transform over several years, renaming the last version *Métamorphoses des Métamorphoses* (2003)¹⁶. She never considers her shows finished, which is key to seeing them as ongoing explorations of person-image. She prefers the sense of transformation in the French word 'marionnette' to the rigidity of the German-derived 'figure' (Gérard), even though she quickly felt being a puppeteer was not sufficient 'to explore the whole terrain of its possibilities'¹⁷ (Schönbein 24).

Considering puppetry as a way of exploring person-image is an unusual way of looking at puppetry and not one all puppeteers would recognize in what they do (including Schönbein who shows no interest in analysing her own work). Schönbein elides herself and her puppets so that it is hard to say who is

14 The choreographer-dancer, Mary Wigman, and artist-performer, Valeska Gert, are mentioned by Gérard in connection with Schönbein (107). Interestingly both were active in the German and American English-speaking worlds when Schilder was developing his ideas, as well as Bodenwieser. The comparison between Schönbein, described as performing with bohemian audacity (Cramesnil), and Gert warrants further consideration, particularly in relation to person-image, but this is outside the scope of this thesis.

15 I have only been unable to obtain permissions from one photographer of Schönbein's work (Guerri). For other images of *Chair*, see Castellat. For images of *Chair and* other shows, see Gérard with photos by Marinette Delanné, Schönbein's long-standing photographer.

16 I saw it in 1996 and have seen most of her work since.

17 My trans. of 'pour explorer tout le territoire de ces possibles'.

moving who. She says, 'The puppet is totally linked to my body for me ... My ideas are always with my body. Each puppet takes my body in a different way'¹⁸ ("Conversation" 11). However, she also says the puppet comes first; you have to adapt the body to the puppet ("ILKA SCHÖNBEIN" *DailyMotion* 00:07:45). What appears is a multi-directional feedback and sensitivity. She is no shrinking puppeteer hiding under a hood or behind a castelet. The shows she creates display facets of the artist at their core¹⁹. She *is* the castelet, and more; her technique is a radical form of corps-castelet which she calls 'body-mask'²⁰. She is ultra-present in every atom of her being; when I first saw her perform in 1996, I could hardly take my eyes off her feet, they were so inhabited and expressive, so present. Her skeletal form vibrates with luminous energy; her person-image seems to extend to all parts of herself and into her puppets, totally elastic and malleable.

She says, 'I belong to my puppets,' (Jusselle 47), 'I've let the puppet take possession of me, of my hands, then of my legs, of my face, of my buttocks, of my stomach, and of my soul'²¹ (Schönbein 24). She responds fully to these material extensions, saying the puppet makes simultaneous dialogue possible; 'you can incarnate at least two people or characters'²² ("Conversation" 11). She is in them and they are in her on a very precise

18 My trans. of 'La marionnette est pour moi totalement liée à mon corps ... My idées sont toujours avec mon corps. Chaque marionnette prend d'une autre manière mon corps'.

19 Bettelheim's psychoanalytical analysis of fairy-tales might offer a starting point for considering the relationship between Schönbein as a woman and the themes in her work.

20 She trained for many years as a dancer in Steiner Eurythmy and in string puppetry with Albrecht Roser (Schönbein 24).

21 My trans. of 'J'ai laissé la marionnette prendre possession de moi, de mes mains, puis de mes jambes, de mon visage, de mes fesses, de mon ventre et de mon âme'. Also cited by Prost, 161.

22 My trans. of 'tu peux incarner au moins deux personnes ou personnages'.

physical level, but also in utterly invested dramatic and ludic play. These are very real possessions through which she seems to find herself in a connection with her audience²³. The audience relation has always been important for Schönbein; she started performing her own work busking on the streets and has expressed the sense of freedom she got from having a very direct playful, but also economic relationship with the spectators.

With Schönbein, puppeteer and puppet share the same status; both are moving and being moved. Her puppets have become part of her body schema and she uses them to explore person-image experientially and visually, from the inside and outside. I focus on *Chair de ma Chair (Chair)*, which she calls 'A solo dialogue between me and the child I was'²⁴ ("Chair" 2006), but for me she is always working on the same theme. Person-image. The ways she does this fall intriguingly between the puppetry of *Fastoche* and the Le Roy of *Self Unfinished* that I consider later in this chapter. She constantly finds new ways to occupy and become possessed by new person-images. Writing on Schönbein, Jusselle theorizes '...if every puppet can become body, the body itself is the first puppet' (57). One reviewer said of her, 'She is not a puppeteer, she is a live puppet'²⁵ ("Chair" 2006), and she says, 'I try to adapt myself to the state of being of the thing that has no life...' (Gross ch. 11). She attaches elements moulded from her body parts and face to different parts of herself, moving, often in front of a mirror, until she finds hybrid forms where the viewer no longer knows where she ends and the puppet begins. She describes

23 I am reminded of my cat-skin possession, albeit a moment of discovery rather than mastery on my part.

24 My trans. of 'Un dialogue en solo entre moi et l'enfant que je fus.' The piece is not, in fact a solo; Schönbein is accompanied by Nathalie Pagnac and Bénédicte Holvoete.

25 My trans. of 'Elle n'est pas marionnettiste, elle est une marionnette vivante.'

working with the mirror as easy because there is an external control; in front of an audience she must find an internal technique to replace it ("ILKA" *DailyMotion* 00:08:15). She attempts to find out how to extract characters from her body (Gérard 123).

Like *Fastoche*, *Chair* is based on a contemporary novel. It is the story of a gypsy circus family on the run from the dictatorship in Romania, seen through the eyes of a young girl in its midst, Olinka. Gross claims the story in *Chair* is 'made to depend on these mysterious objects, always caught in transition between animate and inanimate, dead things that can become the vehicle of a spirit'²⁶. He refers to the two-way impulses between the puppets and puppeteer, writing 'the desolation and uncertain life of the puppets was bound to the desolation and life of that body, which so strangely put itself at risk to animate those figures, to bring itself close to their condition of uncanny, half-deathly life' (ch. 11). The hard lives of the characters emerge as hard visions in Schönbein's sculpting hands and sinewed movements. Her person-image is transformed in this process and there is no functional separation between her and her puppets. She sees the process of animation as one where a piece of life is torn from death, which itself is sitting inside her, in the form of her 'squelette sauvage' (Gérard 14). She embodies her skeleton as an inner puppet, an idea introduced in Chapter 5. There is a tension between the living and the non-living in her work and it is often hard to distinguish between them (105).

²⁶ Gross writes, 'The puppets in Ilka Schönbein's *Chair de ma chair* (My own flesh and blood) were less separate creatures, things with bodies and heads of their own, and more parts of bodies, worn, stressed, starved, and exhausted remnants. Many were hollow masks of faces, broken or split. Others were supplemental limbs, perverse prostheses, an arm and a shoulder, a partial torso, a leg with a cane as if thrust through it, or reaching arms attached to the spokes of a bicycle wheel. These puppets seemed as close to ruin as possible. Moving them with both delicacy and eerie devotion, the puppeteer held these masks, limbs, and torsos by turns close and apart from her own body, using now her hand, now her own head, even her feet. She was always present onstage, a body stained, worn, almost starved. Her own face was often visible below the masks she wore—the margin between face and mask was at times like a scar' (ch. 11).

That Schönbein is the centrifugal hub around which her puppets fly is demonstrated in her puppeteering (or her puppets'?) choices. In *Chair*, she is clothed as the mother-aerialist for her first appearance, with pale flesh-coloured material covering her whole body except for one leg, which is in black, and a red bra (Figs. 16 & 17²⁷). The black leg is, if you will, the masked puppeteer; the rest of herself, Schönbein gives to the puppet. She covers the right half of her face with a mask attached to a skein of vivid red hair and holds a papier-mâché leg, topped by a red-knickered pelvis and pierced by a walking stick ("Chair. Sallaumines" 00:01:11). (The walking stick will later be used as just that, leg still attached, when the mother has had the accident that was waiting to happen.) Standing on the black leg, she creates the illusion of flying by lifting her other leg and the papier-mâché leg, a trope she uses in other shows. It is the movement of her pelvis, with the puppet leg held closely against it, that drives the movement of the image. The pelvis and standing leg are the axis around which the rest moves. There is no sense of independent life or animation; she is the source and control of the image, utterly involved in it to her core. Not wearing a mask but possessed by the puppet. Her own and the puppet's presences and body-images are inextricably interwoven and interdependent. When she whips off the mask and drops the act, the leg/walking stick becomes an object again; the moment of possession is over (until the next one).

This relates to a point Schilder makes about the contradictions in human beings:

We desire the integrity and the totality of our own body; we are afraid of every change which may take away a part of this body (castration and dismembering motive); but we are still continually experimenting with

²⁷ See also Gérard 29.

it. Our delight in imagining beings with an increased number of limbs is an example of this experimentation. I remember the strong impression made on me by a scene on the vaudeville stage when the body of a performer was so well concealed behind the body of another that only his arms and legs protruded and one saw an individual moving with four arms. This is the playful multiplication of limbs²⁸. It is the same motive which comes out in the innumerable limbs of Indian Gods and Goddesses. Very similar motives are to be found in the drawings of children. (2000:205)

His linking of this phenomenon to childrens' drawings is important in relation to Schönbein; fairy tales are often her source, and the self-transformations and iterations in her work strongly relate to the exploding possibilities in the child's imagination. It is no surprise she has made superb work for children²⁹, and even her early street work was, by its democratic placing in the public sphere, for everyone rather than for adults alone.

Schönbein's manner of making her puppets, incorporating the forms of her own limbs and face with objects, conjures a world in which things invade person-image and people meld with things, as with the walking stick-pierced leg. At another moment in *Chair*, she wields two lower legs (the child's) with ice-skating blades emerging directly from the feet (fig. 19); object and anatomy are welded together as she is with her puppets. A child mask has a comb embedded in its scalp which she sometimes uses as the puppet's control (fig. 20). The nonhuman comb is embedded in the human-seeming puppet and acts as human-puppet go-between. And at another point, she merges the child with a bicycle wheel (fig. 21), creating a metaphorical prison; a sense of the

28 Multiple legged, flying combinations of beings are a common occurrence in Schönbein's work, such as in *La Vieille et la Bête* (Gérard 19) and *Voyage d'hiver* (Gérard 26, 27).

29 *Le Roi Grenouille* (1998); I saw the 2006 version. Also her collaborations with Laure Can-nac, Alexandra Lupidi, Kerstin Wiese and others.

life on the road she cannot escape. In another show, *Voyage d'Hiver* (2003), pieces of torso and mask meld with a window frame (Gérard 99-102).



Figs. 19, 20, 21 Ilka Schönbein/the Child in *Chair de ma Chair*, 2006. Image © Frederick Guerri.

The relationship with the only man figured in *Chair* is entirely different to that with the child and mother puppets. Schönbein plays Olinka, and the man, a puppet, is her father; her knees are his backside, her feet are in his shins and she moves his arms, upper body and head with her arms through his nightshirt sleeves (fig. 22). Her ankle joints are his knee joints, her knees his pelvis and her arms his neck. These non-habitual roles assigned to joints might have delighted Feldenkrais. Schönbein maintains two characters throughout this uncomfortable, incestuous sex scene, hovering between agony and ecstasy. Sometimes there are overtones of a baby (the man) suckling at its mother's breast. She is herself/Olinka from the pelvis up; the father a semi-conjoined and unwelcome partner she conjures and plays with. That's a lot of

plates spinning. Developing the ability to play with person-image and diffused focus would make a useful contribution towards training to do this.



Fig. 22 Ilka Schönbein as Olinka with the Man/her father in *Chair de ma Chair*, 2006. Image © Frederick Guerri.

Schönbein varies her technique on occasion. In *Winterreise* (2003) she creates a figure with an elongated spine topped by a chamber pot head above her own, with a ribcage visible beneath a cotton smock which descends to the floor - her arms in its arms. She dances round and round and the spine's flexible material responds; it is the continuity of her own expressive and flexible spine. The puppet spine magnifies and extends her movement. If her movements were rigid and she did not have access to all her vertebrae in her person-image, the puppet would not have this expressivity. The performer extends her person-image into the puppet. She creates interest and confusion

by her displacement of masks and body parts, feelings which arise perhaps from the fact that although we acquire a sense of our human bodies, a child-like sense of potential lingers, if only in dream. She creates illusions, blurring the viewer's perception of where she is or of who is present. This reminds me of Feldenkrais's use of non-habitual movements to re-ignite curiosity in one's actions. Schönbein gives external form to her play with non-habitual person-image.

Person-image is malleable, incoherent, evolving; it is to be played with, as Schilder suggested. The development of person-image is a process of inhibition, where all possible images are progressively contained and shaped into something that fits into the society of other person-images, even as it continues gradually to evolve. Schönbein holds open a door to look back into that cauldron of potential. In a sense Feldenkrais's 'five lines' are a fiction and a limitation. Why not three or a hundred or a thousand lines³⁰? NASA scientist turned origami-artist, Robert Lang, makes hundreds or thousands of creases in a single sheet of paper to produce a wide and wild variety of abstract and nature-based forms ("Crease Patterns"). Without diminishing the value of using the five lines, which relate to a biomechanical norm, for helping to develop awareness of person-image, I think there is space to experiment beyond this too and consider unlimited or limited lines and directions into and from the person. This is the work of puppetry. Schönbein riffs on this.

Of the central relationship explored in *Chair*, Schönbein, quoting the novel on which the piece is based, says:

30 As alluded to in Chapter 4, some people actually have three lines (double leg or arm amputees, or conditions where one or more limbs is not present from birth), and some experience more or fewer lines than their physical body manifests (phantom limbs, paralysis).

This mother loves her daughter to the point of eating her. 'My daughter is my life. If my child abandons me, I'll die.' She has not understood that the truth of love is to give the child its freedoms so that its own personality can develop. And the child realizes, 'My mother comes in and out of me. I seem like a photo of my mother. I seem without my self.'³¹ ("Chair" 2006)

A mother's desire to consume her children is archetypal, and typical. I feel it. The question of space for the child is real; she needs the space to develop an independent person-image. This relates to what Feldenkrais refers to as maturity, which comes from self-determination. The focus on the mother-daughter relationship in *Chair* implicates the mother in the person-image of the child. She threatens like a phagocyte while the child attempts to establish her own person-image. Schönbein's body-mask technique is justified thematically; the figures of mother and child partake of the same body here. There is one person at the centre of it all, with an expansive, elastic person-image. Schönbein's possession is not only by the puppets, but also by the text: 'I didn't adapt the text at a desk! It's the puppets which each chose their parts'³² ("Chair" 2006).

She incarnates the child in *Chair* on a less one-on-one basis than the mother, her face sometimes visible and commenting, or counterpointing, the child mask she holds in one hand in front of her, as well as sometimes playing and speaking as Olinka. At one point, she sits with one leg folded under her

31 My trans. of 'Cette mère aime sa fille jusqu'au point de la manger. « Ma fille c'est ma vie. Si mon enfant m'abandonne, je meurs. » Elle n'a jamais compris que la vérité de cet amour c'est de laisser la liberté à l'enfant pour que puisse évoluer sa propre personnalité. Et la fille se rend compte « Ma mère entre et sort en moi, j'ai l'air d'être une photo de ma mère, j'ai l'air sans moi »'.

32 My trans. of 'Je n'ai pas fait le choix du texte au bureau! Ceux sont les marionnettes qui ont choisi, chacun son propre passage'.

and the other standing in front of her, wearing a papier-mâché forearm and hand holding a bowl on her foot. I see a child with an emaciated and elongated upper arm and shoulder (Schönbein's real shin, calf and knee). Schönbein switches constantly between shadowing the child character, being the character, and projecting into and through the puppet³³. Here is a multiplicity of separate person-images, selves with faces, in contrast to Le Roy's fluid unfinished self (below), and Tual's trinity of separate entities.

Just as Schönbein plays with syncopated rhythms banging with the bowl and spoon and the words she speaks ('Mutter...Mutter...'; 'Mother...Mother...'), she also syncopates attention and presence between herself, her limbs, and the elements of the puppet. She plays with layers of presence, at one point maintaining a fixed point with spoon in mouth in disbelief at her mother's departure while the child mask continues to move, head searching forward. The dexterity of self here is something akin to a drummer maintaining multiple rhythms with hands and feet. This is not a puppetry of the hands; it is dexterous in Bernstein's sense, for whom 'dexterity is in finding a motor solution for any situation and in any condition' where 'demand for dexterity is not in the movements themselves but in the surrounding conditions' (Bernstein Essay 1). Schönbein holds the child mask with her reddened hand over its mouth and eats out of its head as if from a bowl (Gérard 83). The soul of the starving, abandoned child is eating its own mind (Gross ch. 11). Or another interpretation. The mere presence of two gazes, hers and the puppet's, demands a split focus of the performer, and of the audience. The dexterity of the performer asks for dexterity from the audience.

33 For a fragment of the scene, see "Chair. Sallaumines" 00:00:55, and the film of the whole piece, Schönbein and Nota.

To look at the skill required for this dexterity, I want to take a detour into a specific ATM lesson from *Alexander Yanai*. In AY 359 "Tanden with bending the knees" (vol. 8a:2465-2472), Feldenkrais asks the students to pay attention to the area just below the navel (the tanden), and then to continue to pay attention to this area whilst also paying attention to the length of the spine, the legs in the hip sockets, the arms and shoulder girdle, the spreading of the face as if it was going to smile, then to all these simultaneously, then all this while doing a simple movement of bringing the head and knee towards each other. Throughout the lesson he says attention to the tanden is the most important and all the rest is just there to challenge this. The puppeteer is always involved in split focus in some way, no matter how simple the puppetry; there is always at least the duo of practical questions, what am I doing? what is the puppet doing? Schönbein visibly attains multi-directional attention; her presence not only runs throughout herself, but into and through her puppets too. Roser told her the secret is to focus all one's attention on the object (Gérard 114). In my view however she moves beyond this to develop absolute concentration on the object whilst being utterly present (in) herself. Tual's focus skips between himself and each of his puppets; he has more of a tendency to occult himself sometimes. This is partly dramaturgical choice, but clearly you need to have the capacity for diffuse attention to use it.

I find the "Tanden" lesson useful towards puppetry because the constant focus on the proximal, while also attempting to sense the more distal parts, helps diffuse awareness throughout myself while maintaining a clear centre. For puppetry this diffuse but centred awareness is key; I need to have a very clear sense of my centre in order to dose the movement of the puppets at the periphery, but also to sense and allow them to destabilize me in creative ways. Schönbein's tanden + distal awareness is visible since both are in play; she is a

good example to help understand why FM is particularly useful for puppeteers. With puppeteers who are not 'manipulating', the proximal-distal relationship is still important although it is not *mise-en-scène*, or *mise-en-avant*. Whether my puppet is on my hand above my head, hanging on strings from my outstretched arm, supported on my shoulders, or whatever, mastery of the *tanden* (proximal) will help mastery of the puppet (distal), which may be one reason dancers often find the basics of puppetry easy to pick up (Buckmaster, *The Great War Horse*). It might be more accurate to refer to mastery of the exchange between the two, or the capacity to respond spontaneously in this exchange. Without a diffuse and accurate sense of *tanden* + periphery, movement in the puppet cannot be mastered (which is not the same as controlled; mastery allows for feedback from the puppet). A musician is constantly receiving feedback from her instrument through the way it feels and the way it sounds which she actively responds to as she plays. With a puppet, movement is produced, so the input and the output are in the same mode (rather than movement and sound). Since my focus is movement, I am not taking into account the voice in puppetry, which adds another layer of complexity of which we caught a glimpse in *Fastoche*. The puppeteer who uses her voice will have to master this aspect of acting and placing her voice as well as the *tanden*-periphery awareness, although these are not unrelated.

It is perhaps no coincidence that Feldenkrais refers to actors and musicians in the "Tanden" lesson:

It is not important what a great actor does. When he is a great actor, whatever he does is okay. How does he become a good actor? There is something inside that he senses, organizes, understands, before he does it and everything that he does is okay. The same thing [applies] to someone who knows how to play an instrument. It is not after he plays note "A" that he goes "I played a note that was not in place" or "not on

time” or with “too much force”. It is already organized before this. He learns to pay attention to the melody despite disturbances that are in the movement, despite the difficulty in the speed of the movement of the hands, reading the notes, or seeing the note. We want to arrive at the same in movement. That means it is possible to hear the melody despite the disturbances in the movement. (AY 359, 2470)

He locates the absence of ability in the faulty self-image:

Get rid of the performance. You will see that when you get rid of the performance, it is possible to distinguish all these faults, this absence of an ability to do something. The absence of the ability is not in the back, not in the muscles, but in the place in the nervous system that is the image of the movement. (2469)

So the tanden-periphery relationship is deeply connected to having a full and organized person-image that can be relied on when the person wants to perform with a puppet. Feldenkrais’s understanding of the power of the tanden serves to underpin the work of the self-exploding puppeteer.

There is a difference however between producing movement in the centre that is expressed towards the periphery (what Schönbein often does), and keeping the centre as a dynamic anchor while producing lots of movement at the periphery, as in much string and hand puppetry for instance. Here the free but full tanden ensures freedom in the shoulders, elbows, wrists and fingers in a manner akin to playing a fingering based musical instrument. So, while what Haller calls ‘minimizing the complications between ourself and another’ (2010) by organizing gently from the centre and not from the extrinsic musculature is key to hands-on in FI practice and some of the puppetry Schönbein is involved in, a slightly different version of this is needed the more distal the puppet. The centre still needs to be organized to free the distal from

excessive tone or tension not only to lift or move weight, but to be freely and creatively dexterous. I am not going to puppeteer your ribs like piano keys in FI, but for FI, puppeteering and piano-playing, I need the same freely available movement in my fingers, wrists, shoulders, spine and pelvis, home of my tanden.

Speaking of her own preparation technique, Schönbein says:

It's difficult to tell you what I do. I don't exactly do yoga, but I try to be as open as possible to what I see and hear ... I also do concentration exercises in my own body. I try to heal things that aren't working ... the most important is to be in the present moment³⁴. ("Conversation" 11)

Her process sounds close to FM, involving self-scanning and attention to fine sensations in order to improve (processes Feldenkrais had no monopoly on), although she also invokes connecting to spirits and sprites in nature. A chacun(e) sa sauce (each to his/her own.) Interestingly, Schönbein says she invents a large part of her shows whilst on the road, driving ("ILKA" *DailyMotion* 00:12:30). This might be seen as another way of using split awareness, like the "Tanden" or a "Bell Hand" lesson; the driving becomes a kind of meditation which unleashes her imagination.

It would be too facile and essentializing to say Le Roy and Tual's work is more masculine and Schönbein's more feminine since the stereotype of the masculine might be seen as more clean and conceptual while that of the feminine might seem messier and more expressive. I can think of plenty of messy, boundary-defying work made and performed by men (e.g. *Par le Boudu*

³⁴ My trans. of 'C'est difficile de raconter ce que je fais. Je ne fais pas vraiment de yoga, mais j'essaie d'être ouverte à ce que je vois et entends... Je fais également des exercices de concentration dans mon propre corps. J'essaie de guérir des chose qui ne vont pas ... L'important ... c'est d'être dans l'observation du moment présent'.

(2001) by Bonaventure Gacon, or *Faust 2360 Words* (2005) by Akhe Engineering Theatre) and conceptual work made and performed by women (e.g. Vera Mantero and Claudia Trozzi). But Schönbein's work *does* have a messy and overflowing aesthetic, even while it is also extremely physically, rhythmically and emotionally precise. She specifies her interest in women's cycles of being and she works for the most part with women, including all the projects she has directed in the last few years. There is a sense of ad hoc in the puppets and things she makes; they evolve as she makes and plays with them, as if she were a child at play. Birth is a recurrent theme (fig. 23³⁵), and the sense of creatures emerging from her conjures the leaky, fluid outpourings of birth and babies; waters breaking, blood, meconium, placenta, milk, poo, wee, sick, tears, screams³⁶. At the end of *Chair*, the audience is invited to eat oozing polenta and red sauce, in which the nearly aborted child, Olinka, has cooked in the story (Jusselle 2008:9). Her attachment and involvement with her creatures is passionate; she births and mothers them. The joy, sorrow and frustration are there. Although not seen as a political artist, she says her creativity engages at the point where politics creates suffering; she seeks provocation (9). For me, her work cuts to the core of motherhood; this is political.

35 See also Gérard 33-40 and 43-47.

36 Jusselle finds the puppet, in Schönbein's work, prolongs the feeling of loss, like feces and (presumably the excretions of) breast and penis (2008:10).



Fig. 23 Ilka Schönbein/birth scene, *Chair de ma Chair*, 2006. Image © Frederick Guerri.

A pregnant woman has her person-image perturbed as she swells and grows another being which will eventually have its own person-image. Her sense of balance is affected, her centre of gravity changes, she swells a little over the whole of her body as her body produces about 50% more blood and bodily fluids; she literally takes up more space. Schönbein allows her puppets to occupy and challenge her person-image in a similar way; this is what I see in a memory from *Métamorphoses*, where she gives birth to a puppet baby³⁷.

Along with Neville Tranter, Philippe Genty and Moussoux-Bonté, Piris classes what Schönbein does as manipulacting, which he defines as disclosing

³⁷ A scene also filmed for the television ("Ilka"), and in a more intimate setting ("ILKA" *YouTube*).

'a human being and an object engaged in a relation of self to Other', (2012:4). As discussed above, I dispute the usefulness of this definition, finding it richer to consider 'manipulating' as an exercise in the flexibility of person-image, where the apparent boundary between self and so-called other is eroded and a person emerges as a knot in a meshwork, rather than in opposition to an 'other'. I also find the terms 'manipulation', 'acting', and their combination, reductive in relation to Schönbein's work where possession and sublimation seem more apt. Prost considers 'the puppet is not a simple extension of her body she brings to life through manipulation', but that 'it is the performer's body which is extended through her doubles' (161)³⁸, suggesting that the puppets are indeed tools in the exploration of facets of person-image. Jusselle sees the half-flesh, half-material puppets as animating the body they have emerged from 'by an effect of reversibility' (2008:9).

Schönbein finds a specific relationship with the ground, with the surface she is on, as well as specific input from each piece and form of her material, and a way of being that is attentive to the meshwork, to concrete reality and the materiality within which, and as which, she becomes. Gérard considers that she reminds us we are our bodies, unique and similar to each other, linked to others (109); finite but meshworked creatures. Schönbein creates an unbounded self and allows for an open reading of person-image that neither Le Roy's mercurial but clean and bounded work, nor Tual's clarity do.

Schönbein allows us to consider the performative merger of person and not-person. She is radically invested in her performances. She inhabits her puppets; they inhabit her. Her puppets are her creations, her emanations, her children to a certain extent. Her performances can be seen as exploring Grosz's

³⁸ Piris also cites Prost's argument (2012:51).

previously mentioned 'multilocal, plural, ambiguous, polymorphous' female sexuality (1994:83) and, more generally, archetypal woman's experience. The impression of a hall of mirrors, or iterations of self is created partly by the deformed moulds of herself she often uses as the basis of her puppets (Prost). She is saying, look at these versions of me, these echoes, aspects, facets, these continuities of me. They are coming out of me. They are in me. There is a fluidity between the corporal and the plastic, the material, which is articulated to give rise to a vision of a fantastic world where psyche and a deep connection to myth, folk and fairy tale is revealed. She is puppeteering with her whole person very clearly. By comparison, Le Roy is more like a disinterested observer of himself in *SU*, and Tual's exploration of self is more anecdotal, less far-reaching, less complex. More psychological.

To return to Schilder's woman with a feather in her hat, it is perhaps not so much that her person-image extends into the feather as that she allows the feather to draw something out of her in terms of a response. By learning to stand and move using the specific support from the surface I'm on, and the specific input of the things I touch, my work as a puppeteer is liberated. This is facilitated by FM and it is a huge part of a puppeteer's work. The ground is the first partner, the first thing, on which the relationship with all the other things relies. Puppetry is responding adequately in the first instance, and then creatively to things and forces outside oneself, with a creative understanding that inside and outside are not strictly opposed. If I try to control and focus on what my puppets, or hands do, I literally have nothing to stand on. Everything on stage is constructed from relations (meshworks), not from actors or acting. The puppet gives solid form to this, particularly in what Piris calls 'manipulating' and other instances when the puppeteers are clearly visible, even if not performing something other than as puppeteers.

Person-image is a relational idea involving how the outside world contributes to the person. Schönbein highlights this; she is becoming through her puppets and the meshworks which are her constantly shifting shows. She does this with child-like glee and pleasure, drawing on fairy-tale dark and lightness; she is like an unhindered child constantly remaking herself through the stuff with which she plays with sensual pleasure. Even her use of the mirror in her creative process is child-like; children play with the visual images of themselves as much as with other sensory and proprioceptive aspects. FM can learn even more child-like pleasure from puppetry, and liberate itself from a too human or anthropomorphic idea of self-image. Nothing is the limit.

6.4 Xavier Le Roy / *Self Unfinished* (1998)³⁹

Put very simply: I become a different person depending on how I construct my body. (Le Roy in Cvejić 2014:158)⁴⁰

The last work I discuss here comes, perhaps provocatively, not from puppetry but from contemporary dance⁴¹. Therefore, by way of justification, I will introduce it via a puppetry act. Not that these are or should be strict categories, but I have, after all, thus far placed my research in the context of puppetry.

39 My experience of this show is via video and Le Roy and others' words about it. Since the discourse around live performance forms a large part of its presence in society given that only relatively few people experience the live event, I think it is justifiable to include this work in my discussion due to its pertinence.

40 My trans. of 'Pour le dire très simplement : je deviens une personne différente suivant la façon dont je construis mon corps.'

41 Although its status as contemporary dance has also been questioned in spite of its intention, and it might also be called 'conceptual dance' (Burt, Cvejić 2015:5) or 'practical philosophy' (7).

In a workshop on Russian articulated cabaret puppets in which I participated in 2003⁴², a colleague made and performed the puppet pictured below (fig. 24). The performer is bent over, hands on the floor; she wears two puppets, one which uses her legs as legs, and the other her arms as legs⁴³. Each wears a coat down to the 'ankles' and the puppet/coat arms cling to the 'legs' of the other puppet as they wrestle, tumble, kick and fight. There are two heads attached to the lower back of the performer. The effect is startling; I see two beings wrestling, while the puppeteer is hidden, albeit unconventionally. Only at the end does the puppeteer suddenly stand up, fling the 'arms puppet' off, and reveal herself; the reveal is part of the number. I knew she was there all along but my imagination is delighted by the sudden revelation. I am reminded of a story a Japanese dancer told me of her first experience of theatre-inspired wonder; after a simple hand puppet show she saw as a child, the puppeteer threw his hands in the air and sent the puppets flying, revealing his bare hands. She found this marvelous. In relation to person-image, the performer says, 'I created these beings possessed of person-image before you and now I contract them back down to myself, or my hands'. The delight arises from the elastic play with person-image. There is one person present, but several person-images.

42 "Stages Marionnettes."

43 Thanks to Sonia Masson for information on this act. For versions of this number by Alexander Matus-Marchuk, see "The struggle" and "Kampf".

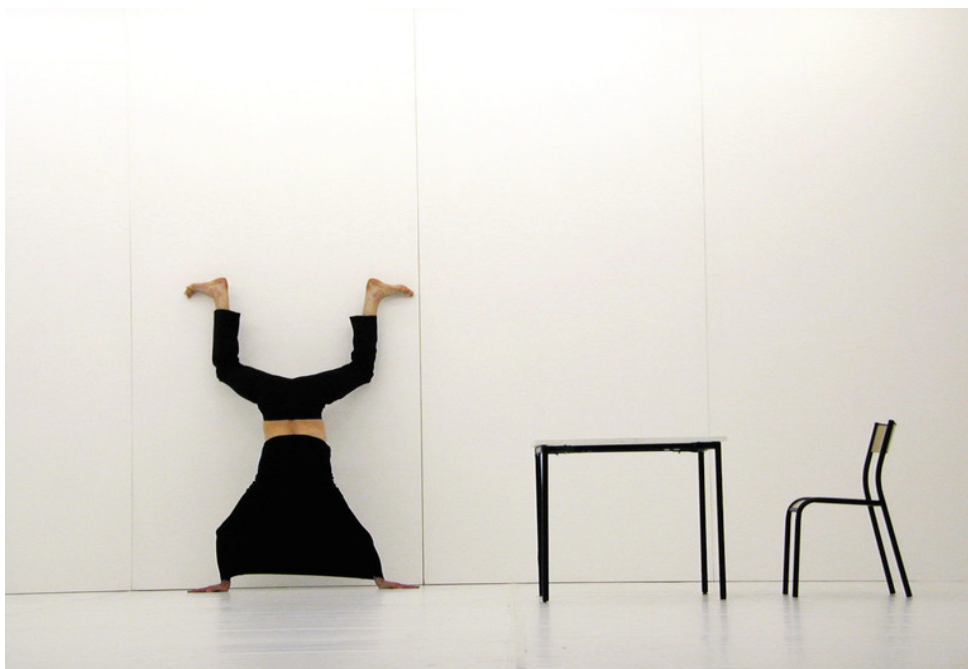


Fig. 24 Sonia Masson in a recreation of a Russian cabaret puppet number, 2003. Puppet design by Galina Molotova and Vladimir Kantor, made by Sonia Masson. Image © Sonia Masson.

The duo of Russian puppets use the walls (to push the other up against) and the edge of the stage (to hang the other off) to great theatrical effect. They seem intent on battling each other, locked in their wrestling embrace, their focus towards each other. The image is fixed – there are two heads on two bodies to latch onto and believe in – and the figures are involved in a situation which has already developed into a fight. There is no question about form or content; the number works brilliantly as it explores the gags and possibilities within the constraint. Two person-images are constructed and inhabited by a single performer and then shed, or contracted back into the performer herself.

The related dance piece I want to consider, Xavier Le Roy's *Self Unfinished (SU)*, was made in response to Schilder's concept of body-image.

Set next to the Russian cabaret number, I think it clearly has its place in this discussion. To an extent, it plays with person-image in a similar way to the puppet number, as can be seen in figs. 25 & 26.



Figs. 25 & 26 Le Roy in *SU*, 1998. Images © Katrin Schoof.

Le Roy's top pulled up over his head makes him into two beings in dialogue, male and female perhaps. The 'woman' advances on the 'man' and there is some conflictual play, as in the puppet number. But the fact that they are joined via Le Roy's midriff such that they appear to merge creates another level of confusion. There are no helpful puppet heads or arms here to help the viewer rationalize what she sees into two beings. I see one *and* two and even three and four beings simultaneously. One *and* two *and* three *and* four person-images. None complete. There are no heads. There are a skirted being, a trousered being, a four-legged, headless being and a man bent over playing these tricks on my mind. A hybrid, yet also separate beings. Cvejić sees these as Deleuzian 'captures'; new entities made in a choreographic composition that partitions the body, clothing and movement (2015:74). The way Le Roy frames this ambiguous multiplicity of selves contributes to how a viewer might read it. He does not start the piece in hybrid form as the wrestler puppeteer does. From the start he is working on what Cvejić identifies as the question, 'how will he not decide what is to be seen?' (75).

I will describe the action⁴⁴. A tall, slim, white man, neither young nor old⁴⁵ sits at a table and looks at the audience as they enter. He wears a grey shirt, black trousers and black, Converse-style shoes. He stops looking at the audience, makes some small robotic gestures and sounds and does a robotic walk⁴⁶. He stops the robot business and moves backwards across the space as

44 Cvejić offers a detailed description and analysis of the *SU* with a different emphasis from mine (2015:73-83); my discussion of it is limited to how it pertains to puppetry and my argument, rather than a systematic approach to it as a whole.

45 *SU* was created in 1998 when Le Roy was 35 and was last performed in 2010 according to Le Roy's website ("Self Unfinished").

46 There is perhaps a dance historical link to be made between *SU* and Bodenwieser's *Demon Machine*, mentioned in Chapter 3, on the theme of person-image and body-as-machine.

he lifts his shirt over his head, bending forward, shedding it to reveal a black 'skirt' underneath; the waist is around his lower ribcage and the skirt descends to his wrists, covering his head, shoulders and arms. His hands and wrists become the feet and ankles of a headless skirted figure, which meets and merges with the headless trousered figure of his legs. There is something about the unstable image which is deeply troubling. The lack of a head or heads, the thing that perhaps most gives a sense of another self, of another person, disturbs. As a puppeteer, I can transform most things into puppets simply by giving them a head, or, more specifically, giving them a direction⁴⁷; a sense that they are focusing on something beyond themselves. This hybrid of Le Roy's might seem to have no outward focus, given the lack of head(s), yet it does give a sense of exploring its simple world (unlike the Russian duo, whose focus is more internal and exclusive). It moves in space in a nonhuman way, like a different kind of organism, guided by other information from its sensitive extremities. The ambiguity of the relationship between Le Roy's lower and upper halves means there is a strong sense that they are evolving in their given environment and in relation to each other.

He goes on to remove his clothing, leaving black shorts and a T-shirt, which he subsequently removes to play with his naked back and arms while resting on his shoulders with his back to the audience and his legs on the floor upstage (like the Plough position in yoga, only with arms outstretched to the sides). He makes his way under the table like this; it boxes him in, his body constantly seeming to morph into different forms. He is continuously constructing and reconstructing his person-image with the objects, including his clothing, on, around and inside him (his skeleton). Cvejić notes reviewers

⁴⁷ According to Mottram in a workshop, puppets are pointing machines; the puppet with the biggest nose would earn the most money in the marketplace, vying for attention.

were uncertain how to name this body; one German article title began, "How to become a chicken: Metamorphoses..." and another used the phrase 'headless crawling creature' (2015:234n.1)⁴⁸. I also see a naked fetus; a self unfinished.

Le Roy doesn't do a curtain call. Diana Ross's *Inside Out* ("Diana Ross") is played as the audience exits; Le Roy awaits them in the foyer. The song's lyrics continue the theme of transformation:

Upside down
Boy, you turn me
Inside out
And round and round

And perhaps also make a comment on the performer-spectator relationship:

Instinctively you give to me
The love that I need
I cherish the moments with you (Edwards et al.)

The slow pace of the performance has demanded attention from the audience; they have operated the transformations. While Le Roy's solo might be seen as solipsistic (Lepecki), and literally navel-gazing at times (in the part seen by some reviewers as a headless chicken), he needs the spectators and cherishes his moments with them.

By entering this space of transformation, Le Roy approaches the territory of puppetry, but in the simplicity of his proposition, he also does something else. Where Tual explodes one person-image into a trinity, and Schönbein creates a multiplicity of separate person-images, fragments, and

⁴⁸ Le Roy concurs that naming is part of the regime of theatrical representation. Cvejić adds that the need to identify the object bypasses the process of differentiation that happens in duration (2014:173). I have not addressed the issue of time and duration in this thesis; there is work to be done in this area with regard to person-image.

world-person encrustations, Le Roy implodes many selves which merge within and perturb one human form and its environment. Using only regular items of simple clothing and retaining the visibility of his bare limbs, he makes no literal attempt to hide the one human body present on stage. Le Roy says, however, that he tries to disappear, 'to become the space, to melt into the environment thanks to my posture and the quality of my presence', to become a horizontal or a vertical line at different moments, 'an object in space' (Cvejić 2014:176-177):

In order to interpret the material, I am attentive to the things with which I am in contact ... I become the contact between the wall, the floor and my body ... I try to think of myself as an element participating in the composition created by the chair and the table, my legs being additional chair legs. I bring an extension to the objects.⁴⁹ (177)

His manner of inhabiting his performance recalls Silk's call for the actor 'to study the concentrated life in a chair, a table, a commode - the unhurried life' (228). Le Roy allows his person-image to be subsumed by the environment; it is truly meshworked, at least from a visual point of view. He sees the elements of the piece, including himself, as part of the same thing, rendered thus by his contact with them. Returning to the idea of puppetry as bringing awareness to handling things, Le Roy can be seen as taking a full-body puppetry approach. The performance situation here provides a limited context in which to observe meshworked person-image.

The piece functions a bit like the optical illusion below, where the viewer sees a rabbit or a duck (fig. 27), except that Le Roy's creation is more complex

⁴⁹ My trans. of 'Afin d'interpréter le matériau, je suis attentif aux choses avec lesquelles j'entre en contact ... je deviens ce contact entre le mur, le sol et mon corps ... je tente de me penser comme élément participant à la composition créée par la chaise et la table, mes jambes étant le pieds additionnels de la chaise. J'apporte une extension aux objets.'

since it involves, at a certain point, two figures in movement that seem to be in a relationship. Two truncated humans welded together. Headless conjoined twins. In the Russian duo some of this complexity is absent: I see two pairs of legs, two sets of arms and two heads, although they could also be conjoined twins. I know there is one person beneath it all, but this is far more like the duck/rabbit. I can see the two human figures, or I can see the human beneath it all, and I can jump between the two. In Le Roy's unfinished self, there are no two to go between, no heads to count; it is all and always transitioning. It is an example of pushing at the boundaries of what a body is, what a body can do⁵⁰, and how a body can appear; Manchev finds not only the self effaced, but also human and even animal morphology (Le Roy et al. 101), and Cvejić that the body is one with its movement (2014:159).

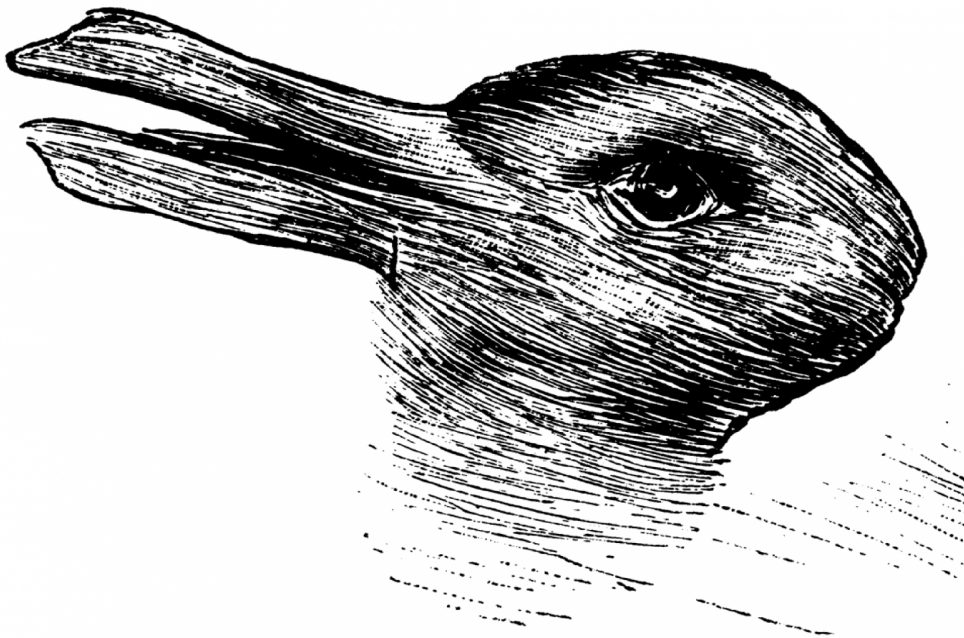


Fig. 27 Anonymous image first published in German magazine, *Fliegende Blätter*, 1892 ("Duck-Rabbit"). Wikimedia Commons.

⁵⁰ Le Roy asks 'what can the body do?' after Spinoza, rather than the essentialist 'what is the body?' (Le Roy et al. 96, Burt).

While Le Roy is not intending to do puppetry, by positioning his work alongside the Russian number, some shared ground is revealed and a discussion pertaining to puppetry opens up. In both, Piris's Self and Other are co-present *in the same place*. In the Russian number, the puppeteer is hidden until the reveal at the end. Le Roy never hides his presence. The puppets are more like body masks perhaps, where it is also true that Self and Other are co-present in the same place, or that other has possessed self. However, *SU* and the puppet number both play with co-presence beyond notions of Self and Other, and can be considered in terms of extensions and transformations of person-image. There is a fecund territory where Self in Other and Other in Self elide and exchange. To me this is more interesting thinking ground than the rather simplistic Self-Other binary. It matters because it points towards how Piris's argument relates to and differs from mine.

In Le Roy's *SU*, I see a man transform himself into a hybrid man-woman-creature, a multiple and evolving thing that is not one or two, but a shifting form and number - literally a self unfinished, undecided, feeling around in the world possibly for other elements to absorb or extend into. Le Roy's origins as a research biologist are hinted at both in the title and form/content of the piece; in a human embryo, the potential beginnings of a new 'self' in terms of sex differentiation begins only in the sixth week of pregnancy. Prior to this, cells multiply, and, while the sex of the child is determined by the sperm, the actual process of differentiation has not begun. In six week old embryos, 'the internal reproductive organ precursors are bipotential, meaning they have the potential to develop into both male and female sex organs given the proper chemical instructions' ("Sex Determination"). Le Roy presents us with the beyond biology vision that this bipotentiality is ongoing, if not on a (unaided)

physiological level, at least on an imaginative level, and he makes this imaginary real, concretizing it in such a way that it plays with my mind.

Le Roy says, 'My body appears as being something else than a human being' (Coccio 00:01:35). For him, the 'self unfinished' arises from the fact that each time he watched back what he did on video as he created the piece, he saw something different although he thought he had done the same thing (Cvejić 2014:167). His subject is not the trick, as with the puppet number, but the slipperiness of the self, including a deft questioning of the fixity of gender via the co-present opposition of skirt and trousers; his title is precise and a super succinct summary of Schilder's ideas - *Self Unfinished*. Self as process. He is exploring the possibilities within a constraint, as the puppet number is, but he has made the constraint much more ambiguous, less specific and presented it within a larger work offering a more complex frame in which to read it. He says:

I wasn't interested in producing the question, 'who is that?', even though I knew the question was a plausible one. As far as possible, I wanted the question to be, 'what is that?', and so invite the audience to ponder the meaning of these things placed in front of it ... the spectator could attribute different meanings to the same object (or same movement), and [that] each individual spectator would regularly remind himself/herself that the body s/he was gazing at was both human and inhuman at the same time. As if s/he were to say to himself/herself 'that's just a person there' and then straight afterwards 'but no, it's not possible, it can't be...' (Cvejić 2011:191-2).

He aimed to keep the viewer's imagination moving, to give her an uneasy experience. Ambiguity of gender is a common zone of play, even in the everyday, but not ambiguity of personhood. There is something monstrous in Le Roy's human/not-human in the way it deviates from 'the natural or

conventional order'; it is 'unnatural, extraordinary' ("monstrous"). It is for him, however, more about simple transformations than internal struggle (Cvejić 2014:160).

This is Yvonne Rainer's wonderful evocation of her experience of the piece:

The brightly lit performing area gives no clues to "how to read" and the mechanical-man beginning is offset with a return to ordinary task-like activity: walk, sit, turn off tape machine. By the time you're into the contortions with the dress, we're given this extraordinary hybrid creature which confronts us with a multiplicity of interpretations. For me it alternated variously as insect, Martian, chicken, watering can, caterpillar into pupa, et al. What saved it from being a Pilobolus-like entertainment (a crowd - pleasing American group that combines bodies to create biomorphic oddities) were the stillnesses and extended durations. We must sit with our attention riveted, waiting for the next stirring. Like watching a spider or snail. Your timing in this piece is exquisite: no pandering to short attention spans here. ("Self Unfinished.")

Her suggestion that timing is key to taking it beyond the trick⁵¹ is interesting in relation to FM where going slowly is more likely to yield change in the self-image. The way Le Roy takes his time allows for the shifting perceptions of the viewer to emerge.

Cvejić refers to the "zones of undecidability" Le Roy identifies - where the body moves forwards and backwards, or left and right at the same time, where it can be simultaneously man and woman, human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate (2014:15). Barba's notions of 'luxury' balance' and

⁵¹ Although a child at the performance in Zagreb asked its mother, 'Can you buy me this toy?!' (Cvejić 2014:173).

'dynamic opposition' (53) pertain here in terms of technique, although Le Roy has his own approach to finding and embodying these qualities. Person-image is modulated in different ways to inhabit movement in performance. In puppetry, the inhabited movement can occur beyond the body of the performer. Le Roy inhabits the stillness of his environment, or allows it to inhabit him.

Deleuzian themes of repetition and difference are present in *SU* and its making. Le Roy's decision to work alone, with video feedback, for *SU* makes his creative process similar in structure to an ATM, repeating movements and observing difference in the context of unfixing person-image. He moves from relying on visual feedback from the video to integrating 'kinaesthetic information' from questions like 'where is my weight?' and 'do I stretch my back or keep it compact?' (Cvejić 2014:168)⁵². We return to Latour's idea that reality expands in relation to one's capacity to notice differences (2004a:85). Deleuze notes that 'real repetition is of the imagination' and 'difference inhabits repetition'⁵³ (103).

I claim above that it is the presence of a directed head which most gives a sense of another self in puppetry, but there are perhaps ways of moving in the world which give the sense of another being, if not what might normally be considered as a conscious one. A thing that seems to have an intention - to find food, to escape trouble, to reach towards something - needn't have a head

52 Spectators often comment they would be in pain in the positions he takes, as if they put themselves in his experience (Cvejić 2014:174); they imagine themselves *in their current person-images* doing what he does, with his person-image, which does not produce pain for him.

53 Spectators often comment they would be in pain in the positions he takes, as if they put themselves in his experience (Cvejić 2014:174); they imagine themselves *in their current person-images* doing what he does, with his person-image, which does not produce pain for him.

to exhibit active interaction with its environment. All living things, including plants and fungi, are moving actively and reactively, but at different speeds and in different ways. So the distinction that is most interesting is perhaps between animate and inanimate, rather than between conscious and non-conscious, which is a philosophical minefield. Even animate-inanimate however is a tricky binary. It is not alive and dead exactly, although it is related to this. Rock is dead in a sense in that it is made from dead matter from eons ago. A clearer distinction might simply be between that which moves itself, and that which doesn't. However, even here there are problems. Lava flows from a volcano. It moves. Rather than a flat category or binary, it makes more sense to see the Earth as an actively moving, animated thing, supporting lots of different gradations along a scale of animateness-inanimateness, or self-moving to non self-moving. In a similar way, I have different kinds of tissue; relatively slow bone, fast blood, faster neurons, as well as hair and nails that can be cut off me to become inanimate objects. All things and qualities of movement in the world are available to influence my person-image; this is what Lecoq's work is about. Feldenkrais's is about how I find support to move from the surface I am on in relation to my self-image. Le Roy's is about how person-image is evolving.

In both the puppet number and Le Roy's piece, the performer is a soloist. The puppet costume attempts to make it seem there are two beings present. They might be able to step apart and exist separately. Le Roy never commits to a number of selves present at any given time and even the different selves or beings that emerge and retreat are partial; they are fragments which depend on each other, never potentially separate entities. In this too Le Roy is very Schilderian; body-image emerges from social and environmental interaction thus body-images are co-dependent on each other,

they form a community. He affirms a multiplicity of co-present body-images which themselves are subject to slippage and change, woven together in a complex meshwork, influencing each other and fed by the environment.

Lepecki arrives at a similar Schilderian analysis of *SU*:

Le Roy's self is unfinished not because it has not been completed yet, but because it can never be completed. This incompleteness does not derive from some tragic interruption of a teleological process, but from Le Roy's predication of ontology on radical incompleteness, on an ongoing process he calls "relation" ... Explaining his idea of relation, Le Roy invokes Paul Schilder's notion of "body-image" (1964), and makes it work along Deleuze and Guattari's notions of becoming and of body without organs (43).

Lepecki goes on to quote a large chunk of Le Roy's text for performance, "Self Interview" ("SI"), in which he asks (himself), 'why should our bodies end at the skin or include at best other beings, organisms or objects encapsulated by the skin?'. Le Roy goes beyond Schilder, seeing the body as 'fluid and dynamic', with 'osmotic' borders' capable of incorporating not only objects, but also discourses. These incorporations are short or long term; long term incorporations could be termed habits. It could be argued that FM is a discourse (amongst other possible discourses) that we propose the student incorporates; a new set of movement habits. But ones which support rather than threaten the growth of the person. For Le Roy, 'the body-image can shrink or expand; it can give parts to the outside world and can take other parts into itself' ("SI"). It can not only incorporate, but also extend to occupy something else, such as a puppet.

Le Roy claims he never wanted to represent 'becoming'; his interest lay in 'the oscillations between two eventual images' (Cvejić 2014:170). Person-image conceived as such, rather than 'imaging', acknowledges the experience

of oneself as fixed; I might experience one thing then another but I am less likely to experience *changing*. Transformability as simple fluidity is criticized by Manchev as a potential 'apology for the fluidity of contemporary capitalism with its unlimited 'permeability' and speed; on the contrary, the power of resistance supposes an immanent *resistability* ... : the weight of experience'⁵⁴ (Le Roy et al. 100-101) (his italics). Le Roy notes that 'fixing' is impossible, but without it we can't understand or progress (101). We are skeletal beings, with access to an almost fixed solidity in ourselves. A deeper sense of the power of Feldenkrais's notion of self-image as a fixed but mutable thing connected to skeletal awareness becomes apparent. Le Roy's interest echoes this; the human feels, understands or sees something, or something else, but not both. The meshwork has fixed nodes, the human has monomotivated coalescences (person-images); they work against a flattening monist view of things.

Psychology, socio-historical context and anatomy do not offer a sufficient basis for Le Roy's notion of body-image; 'All kinds of non-human influences are woven into us,' he says. He proposes that, 'The body could be perceived as space and time for trade, traffic and exchange,' acknowledging Grosz in relation to this idea ("SI"). Feldenkrais might be seen as having remained attached to older ways of understanding self-image including the homunculus and an emphasis on anatomy via the skeleton. But in terms of what he did, he fully acknowledged the person as a space for exchange; his method is a dance of exchange, physical in FI and via words in ATM. Le Roy's expansion of the concept of what he calls body-image to allow for the inclusion of and extension into objects and discourses is an important conceptual progression from where Feldenkrais left self-image. Le Roy ultimately sees that

54 My trans. of 'l'apologie de la fluidité du capitalisme actuel, de sa "perméabilité" et de sa vitesse illimitées; au contraire, la puissance de résistance suppose une *résistabilité* immanente ... : le poids de l'expérience'.

'if each individual is perceived as an infinity of extensive parts, 'individual' would be a notion completely devoid of sense'; here he rejoins Schilder's community of body-images and Feldenkrais's notion that 'who' does an action becomes less important as person grows and improves, to be trumped by 'what' and how and they do the action. 'Individual' loses its sense because it is a process of exchange and connection with other 'extensive parts'. (Le Roy's thinking stays very much in the material world, as does Schilder's and Feldenkrais's.)

Le Roy continues enigmatically,

because I am composed by an ensemble of an infinity of infinite ensembles of extensive parts, I never stop to perceive exterior stuff. Perceptions of myself in my relations to exterior stuff. Perceptions of exterior stuff in relation to myself, and it's all this which make the world of signs. THANK YOU TO DELEUZE, THANK YOU TO SPINOZA. ("SI")

I take this to mean that there is ultimately no interior or exterior, but only the capacity to sense, which amounts to saying I am my capacity to sense. This capacity gives me my person-image. In terms of puppetry, person-image then takes on a vital role as the communicative interface where me and not-me mingle.

Later in "SI", Le Roy refers to a proposal for a project involving 'Experiments and investigations about human and non-human bodies as extensions one from another, using "movement-based art", their performances and representations'. This could describe a starting point for a puppetry project and harks back to what I mentioned at the start of this chapter: there is scope for a more radical enquiry into what distinguishes puppetry as an artform that, more than any other, specifically investigates humans and nonhumans as 'extensions

from one another'. This might not result in any output recognizable as puppetry, a show, or a concrete research outcome. Le Roy criticizes and wants to escape what he perceives as the capitalist constraints on scientific and artistic research which requires them to *produce* papers or shows ("Score"). A space is needed for deep, non-goal oriented investigation.

Towards the end of "SI", Le Roy makes two statements;

The utopic implies the presence of the imaginary because fiction is inherent to sensorial process itself.

The utopic is not beyond reality but contaminates reality by the permanent activity of our perception. (His italics.)

The fiction inherent to the sensorial process itself relates to person-image; use of the imaginary and the imagination are required elements simply for everyday existence, not extra add-ons. The utopic person-image is unattainable but that is not the point; it opens the space for the imaginary and the imagination. The utopic person-image therefore 'contaminates' reality by challenging the activity of perception and imagination. Contaminates here could also be replaced interestingly by 'liberates'.

Lepecki claims Le Roy's (and, by default, Schilder's) desire is to 'replace the singular notion of the body as 'stable unit bound by the surface of its skin, the body as spatially and temporally belonging only to the place-instant of its appearing, with the centrifugal notion of a body-image as unfolding multiplicity spreading in time and space'⁵⁵ (129). The puppet however is *not* becoming, it is being - it has no internally produced body-image, only one given to it by a puppeteer. The becoming of the puppet comes about only through its use.

⁵⁵ Although, as noted above, Le Roy's is a nodal multiplicity, not a smooth one.

Sometimes the desire is to make it seem as though it is alive, therefore becoming, unfolding, but sometimes the desire is for it to be what it is and not a stand-in for a becoming something. When it is not in use its uncanniness emerges since it is capable both of becoming and being in a way a human body is not (Bell 2014, Freud, Jentsch). The puppet is connected in a signifying meshwork since it is a made and used object; it is part of a discourse even when it is not integrated into someone's person-image.

In a later piece, *Untitled* (2005)⁵⁶, Le Roy himself chose to use puppets. Spectators were given torches which they could use to discover bodies on stage, some human and some puppet. He wanted the puppets 'because they involve human beings in a prosthetic relationship with and to an inanimate object' (Cvejić 2011:193), (to move a puppet, a human must move), and in order to explore 'the interdependency of the environment and the body, whereby the environment is regarded as an extension of the body and the body as an extension of the environment'. Le Roy observes what amounts to the influence of objects on person-image, or 'how a body in contact with an object makes another body, or another entity with specific ways of moving and being'. The focus when observing person + object is on the qualities of the object rather than the transformation of the person(-image). Le Roy notes that typically an observer sees a bag that looks heavy, rather than the shift in tension in the person carrying the bag. In preparation for *Untitled*, he spent hours moving and being moved by objects with varying 'density, fluidity, elasticity, and rigidity', to experience the effect on his body (Cvejić 2015:118). This led to the construction of a 'human-like object' from stuffed clothes, moved proximally body to body, with the hands, or distally with strings. Cvejić notes points

⁵⁶ My only experience of this piece is through its traces; critical writing and a paucity of photos.

where 'action blurs the source of movement' so that 'the causal relationship-between human agency and the inanimate material thing appears reversible' (119). A performer admits having to change the choreography depending on how the puppets react, saying that 'neither the performers nor the puppets are completely independent, "free and his own. It's the connection"' (123). However, this slow performance in the dark mostly annoyed audiences (124), and seems to present a conceptual play with perceptions and categories regarding person-image as much as a dialogue with materials or an investigation into human-nonhuman interactions where the co-creation of person-image might be scrutinized. Le Roy moves from an undecided body in *SU* to a confusion of bodies in *Untitled*⁵⁷. Both have an affiliation with puppetry but make the spectator do different work. By applying a puppetry perspective as I have here, with a particular focus on person-image, the works open up in new ways which point to territories that puppetry practice might go on to investigate.

⁵⁷ Cvejić finds that *SU* and *Untitled* both ask not 'Who is it?', but 'How is that a body? Is it a body? ... Where does the movement come from if not from the body and if it doesn't extend in space?' (2014:14).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

... the space shrunk between puppet & person & all became humanized & wooden at once.

Rampolokeng (219)

My aim in this thesis was to clarify the concept of person-image in FM and examine it in relation to puppetry. To do this, I returned to Feldenkrais's source for self-image. Schilder provides an important exploration of ideas on person-image (his 'body-image'), rooted in clinical practice and an intuitive grasp of lived reality as meshworked. I discovered in Schilder an important, and hitherto untapped, resource for thinking about person-image in relation to puppetry and objects, and their integrations in us. Ingold's meshwork has provided me with a conceptual context which enables puppetry and person-image to be considered as part of an ecological whole. I conclude that person-image and puppets are nodes in the meshwork, and use the term 'nodal meshwork' to guard against a sense of a homogenous monist or holistic whole. There are nodes and holes in the whole! The meshwork is textured. Not all of Latour and Bennett's actants have the same weight or influence. Those that can move themselves with intention have a responsibility in the meshwork.

I have trawled Feldenkrais's work and my experience of it to elaborate person-world collaborations as producers of person-image and how this phenomenon can inform puppetry practice. I have analysed ideas around human-world relations presented by Kleist and Silk, and Lecoq in his pedagogy, as a focus to hone my own suggestions towards a new practice that I call

Awareness Through Puppetry. Using the rich, porous, pliable concept of meshworked person-image that I have developed, I have analysed performances by Tual, Schönbein and Le Roy and shed light on the work that might yet be done by puppetry. I conclude that there is a new subversive and radical phase that puppetry can move into as a somatic technology.

A radical approach to puppetry and its possibilities as a human artform cannot ignore person-image and cannot revolve solely around the 'actant' capacities of things and materials, but must involve refined somatic sensing. Asked whether, as a FM practitioner giving an FI, one should be concerned with oneself first or with one's student, trainer Karzen says without hesitation, always yourself first. In FI, Haller and Zones place a particular emphasis on self-organization in order to be available to sense what's going on in the other person. Being available to sense is also at the heart of puppetry. Puppetry could benefit from fundamental research on the intermingling of, and responses between, human and nonhuman bodies, on the co-creation of person-images between human and nonhumans.

According to Claudel, in relation to Bunraku, but also transferable as an idea to puppets more generally, 'You don't touch a puppet and it doesn't know how to touch you. All its life and its movement come from the heart'¹ (Plassard 80). The puppet is a part in a fragile meshwork of lines along which intuition and feeling, both part of skilled action, must run. It is unique in its quality as both inanimate and animated. A puppeteer has access to movement in both worlds and the puppeteer's skill grows as her awareness of animate-inanimate transactions increases.

1 My trans. of 'On ne la touche pas et elle ne sait pas toucher. Toute sa vie, tout son mouvement lui vient du cœur'.

When I saw Bunraku in Osaka in 1999, I was struck by the combination of astonishing skill with a kind of naïve delight, both in the creation of the performance and in its reception by the audience. Waves were created for a scene of two horsemen going further and further out to sea, the puppets replaced by smaller ones to create the illusion. Barrault remarked on the fact that in spite of the concentrated and contemplative performance, the scene changes were noisy and informal; 'there is no attempt to hide the 'jeu''² (2011:14). Claudel refers to the notion from Japanese literature of the *ah-ness* of things that make you go 'Ah!'. This scene of puppets at sea made me and others in the audience go 'Ah!'. An ATM or FI frequently makes me go 'Ah!'. This 'ah-ness' might also be called the 'elusive obvious'³ or the surprise of the expected. In relation to person-image in FM, the 'Ah!' might translate as feeling, 'Oh, I can be like this' or 'I feel more like me'. In watching and doing puppetry I argue that it comes from seeing or sensing the habitual boundaries of person image transgressed.

Playing with person-image, and creating new person-images, is the work of both actors and puppeteers. Writing about Handspring's work, Marx states that 'the puppet and its visible puppeteer exist as a physical hybrid; the puppet grafted onto the puppeteer's life force, and the puppeteer grafted onto the puppet's likeness and visual association' (245). Life-force here relates to person-image as discussed in this thesis and suggests the arguments can trot both ways; the concept of person-image is a tool both for new ways of analysing performance and for performance-making.

2 My trans. of 'On n'essaie pas de dissimuler le "jeu"'.

3 The title of one of Feldenkrais's last books is *The Elusive Obvious*. In it he tries to consolidate the thought and experiences of his life.

FM can be a precursor to anything - it can potentially help to improve any activity or function. Puppetry and FM are both, in some way, arts of movement and manipulation (albeit a contentious term), both are conversations between materialities. In this thesis I show how attendance to oneself - somatic awareness - enhances material awareness and swells the appreciation of the vibrancy of matter, giving it more chance of a performative life. Human bodies are extremely varied but also made of the same material and all contain a similar structural constraint (the skeleton). Feldenkrais, with his 'concise, abstract image', is offering a way to work with human sameness, without denying difference and without claiming that the abstraction is real or true; it is, precisely, an image. Looked at in this way, person-image can be seen as a tool, a kind of thought experiment, for exploring shared human concerns on a very basic level; a tool which works on how to be actively engaged in the world and other people beyond mere adaptation to circumstances, on how to have a *constructive* critical presence in the world, not just the capacity for critical thought.

I propose that puppetry and FM, and particularly a cross-fertilization weighted either towards Awareness Through Puppetry, or Puppetry Through Awareness, offer *practical means* to deliver a shift in ways of living and inhabiting the world of the kind Ingold, Bennett and Sheets-Johnstone desire and theorize, as these practices centre on being *more skilled in relation to the environment*. Part of my contribution to knowledge consists in suggesting that knowledge cannot grow as long as it stays within the confines of theory. I could not have written this thesis entirely at a desk. I offer some suggestions towards specific ways of approaching practice, which I claim must engage awareness. This, rather than the specific examples I write about, is paramount.

FM, and arguably any art, centres around the capacity to sense differences. Latour observes that the more you learn the more there is to learn in the sense that developing the capacity to sense differences increases one's 'reality'. He writes, 'There is no end to articulation whereas there is an end to accuracy,' (2004b:210), echoing Feldenkrais on many occasions emphasizing that his search is for improvement, not correct movement. Improvement comes through articulating more parts of oneself, which FM accomplishes through more articulate movement. In FM, you repeat a movement only for as long as you are interested in it, and can still discern differences each time. There is no 'right'. Lefebvre suggests that rhythmicity involves not repetition but 'differences within repetition' (Ingold 2011:61), which relates to Latour's notion of articulation over accuracy and Feldenkrais's anti-perfectionist call to do things well but not too well because then you'll be bad.

A shift towards thinking in terms of improvement and ever greater articulation dovetails with an understanding of the emergent nature of action. Bernstein wrote that dexterity involves the '*tuning of the movements to an emergent task*'⁴ ("What is Dexterity?") (his italics). I need to develop my capacity to make distinctions between this and that in my own experience in order to enable this tuning. There is a footnote to AY 339, one of the lessons I refer to in Chapter 4, about the concept of 'Havdalah' in Jewish tradition, which is said to mean distinction, and is used in relation to remembering the Sabbath as distinct from the other days, thus reminding people of the distinction between sanctity and secularity. The sages apparently explain, 'If there is no wisdom, how can one differentiate?' (vol. 7b:2328). Feldenkrais's notion of self-image is the wisdom he offers, against which each individual can come to sense her difference, and also the difference between her experience of herself

⁴ Also qtd. in Ingold and Whitehouse (19).

an hour ago and now. In performance training, making and enacting, person-image is a focus for investigation, a generative tool, a theme and a route to understanding material theatres which push at the boundaries of the human. It lights a path for puppetry towards a more radical questioning of itself as an artform.

FI is often exhilarating to watch as a person becomes more and more differentiated, her movement lighter and lighter, involving more and more of herself, as she accepts a more intimate collaboration with the world she is in and of. The practitioner appears to have almost magical powers; she does so little and the person responds so much. The practitioner reminds the person of her humanity, and is reminded of her own. The puppet-master injects humanity or vitality into the puppet, or channels this from the thing. In the puppet, the more articulation, the more expressive generally speaking. Likewise with the person. While there is a clear difference between working with inanimate matter and working with people – a puppet is a tool which can be physically altered or rebuilt – there are also many similarities in how to work such that the movement is expressive and meaningful. But it is not an equal power relationship and the balance of responsibility for one's actions is tipped towards the human. The puppet doesn't learn, although it can become looser, and can break. FM attempts to prevent people from breaking, needing knee replacements and so on.

On a simple level, watching humans engage within sensitive feedback meshworks with other humans and nonhumans is at the heart of all live performance. A somatic approach to puppetry and a puppetry approach to theatre-making focus on this. Tools or puppets help tune awareness because there is an outcome beyond oneself. Somatic education such as FM can benefit from using them.

Thing interlude #3: Noodling

Another tiny tale of person-image between matter and movement.



Figs. 28, 29, 30 Photos of Pansy Fredricksson, aged 2, and her dinner, by Kristin Fredricksson, August 2015. Image © Kristin Fredricksson.

Three photos of my two year old daughter's dinner. I'm not sure how it all started, whether the drawing was interrupted by the arrival of dinner, or whether dinner was interrupted by the need to draw; I came in at the point the first photo was taken, while the noodles were being circled with blue crayon. Was Pansy drawing the noodles in her drawing on the right? Or did the noodles arrive and seem to her to be a 3D orangey-yellow drawing in need of some blue? Was she drawing her drawing, this time on the plate? Or continuing her drawing from the paper to the plate? Did she draw the noodles or did the noodles noodle her drawing? The event is a collaboration between Pansy, her crayons and paper, the plate and the noodles. I think there is more here than just being proud of my daughter's artistic spontaneity and flair for colour!

There is something happening to do with how a child is negotiating person-image and world, how the world permeates and traverses the person, and how it, the world, the stuff in it, needs and finds expression through the person who is its translator and interpreter. Crucially, the world *a/so* translates and interprets the person. So the ecological question, what are we doing to the world? is too simple and must be expanded to, what is it doing to us? Because the first is unanswerable without the second. Puppetry is an activity at the heart of questioning the relationships between person-image and world. Pansy is eating the noodles by absorbing them into her person-image rather than taking them into her oesophagus and gut!

*

A visitor to Le Roy's *Rétrospective* exhibition, where parts of his choreographies from the previous twenty years were exposed, is reported as saying, 'I can't consume here? It's impossible'⁴ (Cvejić 2014:31). Faced with real dancers performing fragments of undance-like dances in and amongst the gallery visitors, this woman, conditioned by consumerist society, was uncertain how to relate to her experience. The work presented was not objects; work is no longer about manufacturing objects but manufacturing ourselves as workers (126). This involves person-image. Person-image is beyond the self; it is part of the meshwork and influences how we navigate and literally feel our way around it. If work is about manufacturing ourselves, efficiency needs to be reframed in terms of human movement, taking into account feelings of effortlessness and spontaneity, amounting to an aesthetic appreciation of oneself in movement. A meshworked notion of self and person-image is an ethical necessity if we are not to end up like Kleist's young man, gazing at an artificial image of ourselves at a distance, in an inanimate object; a cool, frigid mirror that views us from afar and from the outside only. Person-image must be understood as the collaboration of inside and outside, and a life process that connects humans socially. Le Roy's approach to dance-making, performance and presentation has some lessons for puppetry. ATP and a puppetry approach to performance-making can be powerful tools in a meshworked critical theatre practice. Aesthetics can be extended to include felt sense in a move from 'Ways of Seeing' to 'Ways of Living'; a shift from the dominance of the (consumable) visual image to the lived sense of (non-consumable) person-image.

4 My trans. of 'Je ne peux pas consommer ici? C'est impossible.'

Before *Chair de ma Chair*, a performer offers dolls to the audience, for them to hold during the show. This choice shows a desire on Schönbein's part to reconnect people to a simple, playful connection to the material world they live in and are enmeshed with ("Chair ... Sallaumines"). Schönbein identifies her first doll as her first puppet. Unsurprisingly, given her later work, she called it Ilka. By some standards Schönbein is brutal with her puppets, but she is never less than passionately engaged with them and with her world.

Schumann, of *Bread and Puppet*, writes:

Objects have been performing under the whip of subjects too long and are now disobedient and can't be counted on any longer. They avoid meaningful relationships and divorce themselves from the intention of subjects. They used to be good and close to our hearts. They almost liked us and seemed to be grateful for our attention, but were deprived of their dignity by the throw-away philosophy, which resulted in the object's revenge: garbage. (49)

On an ecological front, the way we use and interact (with our person-images) with things affects how quickly they are used up or break. Increased sensitivity and awareness from everyone would have a major impact. And, in caring for things, more reflection might go into what things are made and how; mature spontaneity might be achieved. The meshwork which includes the animate and the inanimate, the living and the dead, could be brought to awareness. This is the puppet's new subversive role; being senseless, it is the gauge of sensitivity, a somatic technology.

*

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